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LETTERS

AND

CONVERSATIONAL REMARKS,

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,

LOMBARD-STREET, LONDON:

DURING THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY S. WHITING & CO. THEOLOGICAL AND CLASSICAL BOOKSELLERS, 96 BROADWAY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH the publication of the letters of Whitfield, Cowper, Romaine, Cadogan, and many other valuable characters, after their decease, may be deemed a sufficient apology for publishing the no less valuable letters of the late worthy Mr. Newton; still it may be proper and satisfactory to state the circumstances which induced me to send them abroad at the present time.

On the Lord's day evening after the death of Mr. Newton, I preached a sermon in Kingsland Chapel, in reference to that event. Before concluding the discourse, I read a few extracts from those letters which he wrote to me while residing in Edinburgh, wherein his views respecting his final dismission were very impressively stated. Since that time I have been repeatedly requested to publish such letters from him as were in my possession. This led me to look over the correspondence, which appeared so truly interesting that I was induced to make a selection, leaving out whatever I thought he would have suppressed had he revised them himself for publication.

I was peculiarly pleased to find, on reviewing my papers, that immediately after Mr. Newton became incapable to carry on epistolary correspondence, I had kept journals of my various visits to London, previous to my settling in its neighbourhood; and that in these journals I had inserted the substance of many conversations which I had with that excellent man. This I did entirely for my own gratification. I cannot,

however, help viewing the period of my commencing this practice as having been overruled by a higher hand, especially as it happened immediately after Mr. Newton's eye-sight was so impaired as to render him unable to write any more letters to his friends; so that the letters and conversations make a connected history of that valuable man, for the last eighteen years of his life.

Having finished my extracts, I put them aside, not to be published till after my own dissolution. Since which time, various friends at a distance, who knew that Mr. Newton had written to me many valuable letters, have very strenuously urged their immediate publication, observing, that every day I withheld them unnecessarily from the public, I was sinfully withholding a mean of great usefulness. This determined me to send them to press as soon as I conveniently could.

I have only to add that I enjoyed great pleasure in performing the task of transcriber. Indeed, it is the only book I have published that I was sorry when I came to the conclusion. I have been edified and comforted almost by every page, and have no doubt but many readers will be affected in the same way. They are commended to the care and blessing of a gracious God.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

KINGSLAND,
December 16, 1808.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

LONDON, November 13, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

* * * * * * *

I AM sorry Dr. M**** should occasion trouble to himself or others. Whatever judgment may be formed of his book, the truth which he opposes will stand firm. It is the very rock on which the church is built, against which, neither force, nor policy, nor sophistry can prevail. I see not how your judicatories can avoid noticing it, unless they give up your public doctrinal standards as untenable. At the same time, I fear that judicial censure will add to his zeal in a bad cause, and likewise add to his fame, and make his book more inquired after. Unless he can be convinced, he will never think himself confuted. And heart conviction is the work of the Lord alone.

The plausible and temperate manner in which he writes, makes his book, in my opinion, more dangerous than all the volumes which Dr. Priestley has published. However, as you observe, the great Head of the church will take care of his own cause, and of his own people. Such things have been from the beginning. There must be heresies. But they who know the Saviour's name, will put their trust in him, when his opposers have done their utmost to prevent it.

May the peace and blessing of the Lord be with you, and with all who love him in sincerity.

I am

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER II.

London, February 3, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter received this morning finds me much engaged, but I am willing to send you a speedy answer, though it must be a short one.

Messrs.**** and **** are both excellent men, and well known to me, though I am not in the habit of correspondence with them. I have no doubt but the account you have seen respecting the revival at Bala is true as to present appearances, and will, doubtless, rejoice all who know the worth of souls, or have the Redeemer's glory at heart.

The account is already in print; I saw it in some Magazine; and therefore you can give no offence by reprinting it. I know nothing more of it than from the letter you have read.

I would be thankful if Mr. **** can fish with a net. I would be thankful likewise for myself; for though I am but an angler, I have reason to hope that I catch *one* now and then.

I am
Your sincere friend and servant,
J. N.

LETTER III.

London, February 22, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I PRINTED the Ebenezers that I might offer a copy to my friends, and as a friend I enclosed one to you. If any of my friends in Scotland think them worth the reprinting, and will be at the expense, (which would not be very great) so that they may be freely and entirely *given away*, I have no objection.

The revival at Bala demands thankfulness. The Lord, according to his sovereign pleasure, now and then vouchsafes such seasons of *refreshment* as draw the attention of many. But hitherto they have usually been local and temporary. I remember one in Scotland, almost fifty years ago. The most extensive, I think, took place in

America about the same time, and was first observed under Dr. Edwards's ministry at Northampton. There is generally much good done in such seasons of power—but we must not expect that every appearance will answer our wishes. There are many more blossoms upon a tree in spring, than there will be apples in autumn. Yet we are glad to see blossoms, because we know, that if there are no blossoms there can be no fruit.

When such sudden and general awakenings take place among people who were ignorant and unacquainted with scripture, they are more or less attended with blemishes and misguided zeal. The enemy is watchful to sow tares among the wheat. Thus it has always been. It was so in the apostles' day. Offences arise, and they who wish to find something, at which they may stumble and cavil, by the righteous judgment of God, have what they wish for. But they who love the Lord, and have a regard for precious souls, will rejoice in the *good* that is really done; and can account for the occasional mixtures, from the present state of human nature.

That the good work at Bala may flourish, and extend to London and Edinburgh (if the Lord please) is my sincere prayer, as I doubt not it is yours. I am

Your affectionate,

J. N.

If Mr. **** comes in your way, I beg you to tell him I am both sorry and ashamed I have not written to him. But for some time past, I have been taken up with *unavoidables* more than usual. Every day brings a something which *must* be attended to, and I am forced to defer what may be delayed without detriment, to a season of more leisure.

LETTER IV.

LONDON, June 2, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been hurt by two or three letters directed to Dr. Newton. I beg you to inform my friends in Scotland as they come in your way, that after a little time, if any letters come to me, addressed to Dr. Newton, I shall be obliged to send them back unopened. I know no such person, I never shall, I never will, by the grace of God.

Do not think I am displeased with you, or any of my kind friends, who mean me kindness and honour by such an address. I only beg for my peace sake that it may not be repeated.

I have been informed that a college in America, I think in New-Jersey, has given me the honourary degree of Doctor. So far as this mark of their favour indicates a regard to the

gospel truths which I profess, I am much pleased with it. But as to the title itself, I renounce it heartily; nor would I willingly be known by it, if all the universities in Europe conferred it upon me. My youthful years were spent in Africa, and I ought to take my degrees (if I take any) from thence. Shall such a compound of misery and mischief as I then was, be called *Doctor?* Surely not.

I thank you for the pamphlets. I have not had time to read them all; but I doubt not I shall like them all,—but that which I *have* read, "The Dialogue between the Devil and a Socinian," I cannot say I approve either the manner or the spirit of it. I am hurt when gospel truths are put into the devil's mouth—nor do I think we are warranted to consign over Socinian ministers so coolly to his powers. I suppose a ready penman at Damascus might have written a smart dialogue between the devil and Saul of Tarsus. But Saul became Paul; grace has long and strong arms; and I think it more becoming a christian, to be unwilling to give any one up, while living. In brief, I cannot think that dialogue likely to do much good; and if it was only designed to hold up an opponent to ridicule and contempt, it might as well have been spared. It is my mercy *I am* not a Socinian; for had I been left to myself, I might have been among the foremost. It becomes me to be thankful; and to

pity and pray for those who know not what they do. May the Lord open their eyes—then they will soon be of our mind.

I shall be abroad (if the Lord please) four or five weeks from the 8th instant.

May the Lord bless and guide you,
and your affectionate servant,
J. N.

LETTER V.

LONDON, Oct. 3, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

A WINTER's task, which I have set myself, will oblige me to make my letters as short as I can, and to indulge myself in no correspondence but what is necessary. It seems, however, if not quite necessary, at least proper, to thank you for yours of the 20th September, and would join you in thanking the Lord for his goodness in giving you a safe and comfortable return home. We enjoy a thousand mercies in common with many who neither pray to him nor praise him; but to know that they come from *him* in answer to prayer, and as earnests of future and better blessings, gives them an additional relish of which worldlings can have no conception.

In this world we have an appointed station and calling, in which our religious profession requires us to be accurate and faithful—But how

to be fervent in spirit and serving the Lord, while we are not slothful in business, is a lesson which only He can teach us. It is necessary to be diligent, but it is not necessary to be rich. The event must be left in his hand; our aim should be to promote his glory, which may be answered either way, whether we have what the world calls great success, or not. If you have a servant or a journeyman who is an honest man, and understands your business, he will be as active and industrious in it as yourself. But then he is not responsible, and when his work is done, he sleeps at night without care. The care of the issue is your part, and whether you gain or lose, you will not blame your servant, who has faithfully done his duty according to your direction.

Now if you consider yourself, as it were a servant or journeyman, so to speak, of the Lord, you will manage your concerns with ease and comfort. The business is not yours but his: you are to employ your talents to the best of your judgment, and then to cast all the care upon him. You need not be anxious, for he will overrule all for the best. Whether he gives you but just food and raiment, (which they who seek his kingdom in the first place, and use his appointed means are seldom without,) or whether he allots you an abundance, either shall answer your professed end: his glory will be equally

answered. In the former case you will have enough, because it is what he sees sufficient for you. In the latter case, what you have more than enough is not your own, but is still to be employed for him. But too many think things do not go well, unless they can amass wealth. They stretch every nerve to be rich, and thereby pierce themselves with perplexities and sorrows. 1 Tim. vi. 6—10.

I have no insight into the prophecies unfulfilled, nor is my mind turned for that study. I would direct the whole of my little strength to the points mentioned, Acts xxvi. 18. What you quote from Mr. Willison* is remarkable, other writers have had the same thought. Who first started it, or whether it has been borrowed one from another, I know not. How far it is the meaning of the passage, time will shew. This I know, that the Lord reigns. I believe he is on his way to fulfil his word.

In the mean time, I wish with you that we were more sensible of our present privileges, and more thankful for them. And that the Lord's people, instead of amusing themselves with politics, may be stirred up to serve their country by prayer. If they sigh and mourn for the abominations in the midst of us, and stand in the breach

* Mr. Willison, in a book published more than fifty years ago, considers Rev. xi. 13, as referring to some great revolution that should take place in France.

to avert deserved judgments, our peace and liberty may be yet prolonged. I think the calamities of France should remind us of Luke xiii. 1—5.

With my prayers and best wishes for your prosperity and welfare in the best sense,

I remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER VI.

LONDON, January 3, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE no skill on the subject of Scotch patronages. I suppose they are what is called *legal*, or they could not take place. But some things deemed right in law there will be, which are not quite consistent with equity. I believe there are as few in our nation as in any. I wish to be more thankful for the peace and liberty we do enjoy. The crooked things I would leave to him, who only can make them straight. You seem yourself to think this evil is overruled for good, by stirring up the people, and spreading the gospel. If this be preached in simplicity, and honoured by a meek, inoffensive behaviour in those who profess it—it does not much signify, whether they meet in a church, a chapel, or a barn.

The times are gloomy: but the Lord reigneth. To him I would refer every thing in public or in

private life. There is discontent in some hearts, and in some places: but I ought to be discontented with myself, that I am not filled with wonder and praise that things are so much better with us than we deserve.

If I was to add another article to our Litany, it might run thus :—"From poison and politics, good Lord deliver me." I think a political spirit as hurtful to the life of God in the soul as poison is to the bodily frame.

I am sorry that I forgot your order for six sets of the Messiah, but I will speak for them as soon as I can. A new edition of Omicron, and of Mrs. A***'s experience are both in the press, and would have been published before now, but that the printers are full of political business, and the intervention of what are called the holidays, and which with many are more emphatically idle days, and sinning days, has been some hindrance. I must write briefly, being much engaged. With my sincere prayer for your welfare,

I am yours, &c.

J. N.

LETTER VII.

London, January 21, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

MANY things in the misguided zeal of the year 1780 surprised me, but none more than that it

should so generally lead the good people of Scotland to think so highly of the man, who, to answer his own ends, put himself at the head of a *religious* party.

I am glad you agree with me, that it is well both for ministers and private christians to have as little to do with politics as possible. Your idea of a pit in the path pleases me. I am afraid it is a pit that will swallow up the life and spirit, if not the very form of the religion of many professors. The Lord reigneth, and every issue will be directed by infinite wisdom and goodness, without our interference. And can we wish them under better management? It is true he usually works by instruments, but there are some services which are not good enough for his own children. He can employ such men as compose the bulk of the French convention, as labourers and scourgers. Sennacherib with his blasphemies, executed his will no less than Hezekiah by his prayers. And he could do no more—he was thrown aside like an old broom, when the dirty work for which he was commissioned was performed. And there will always be dead sufficient to bury the dead.

I have told you why I cannot afford to write long letters. The Lord bless and guide you. Amen. am

Yours sincerely,

J. N

LETTER VIII.

LONDON, March 22, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

* * * * * * *

I WILL now thank you for yours of the 4th; but I am not responsible for your dream. I certainly was not with you on the night you mentioned; and if I had, I should not have made the speech you heard from my representative. What the Lord might justly do, I know not; but at present my thoughts are not so gloomy. The gospel is with us, yea increasing among us, and I trust there is a goodly number, who are mourning over their own sins, and the sins of the nation, and are standing in the breach by prayer. For their sakes I hope mercy will still be afforded. I rely more upon their prayers, than upon all our fleets and armies. I thought I saw a wonderful interposition of providence in our favour about the beginning of December. Since that time I have been in tolerable spirits.

The christian politicians are to be pitied, and I have time for no more than pity. May the Lord bless you. I am sincerely yours,

J. N.

N. B. Now in the press, and will be published (I hope) before August, Letters to a Wife, in 2 vols. 12mo. by the Author of Cardiphonia.—Pray for a blessing on this publication.

LETTER IX.

LONDON, May 18, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE hardly time to acknowledge your letter, but know not when I shall have more. As you desire it I will send you my thoughts very briefly.

So far as popery may concern the civil state of the nations, I apprehend no great danger from it. Infidelity and scepticism seem to me the spreading popery at present. The spirit and strength of popery seem quite broken, and the pope himself I think is little more regarded by the bulk of the Roman church, than by the Protestants. The heavy penal laws, formerly in force, however politically necessary, do not appear to me consistent either with the letter or spirit of the new testament.

In a religious view I cannot see why a papist has not as good a right to worship God according to his conscience, though erroneous, to educate his children, &c. as I have myself. I am no friend to persecution or restraint in matters of conscience.

The stir made in 1780, at a time when protestants were gaining more liberty in popish countries, I thought was a reproach to our national character, both as Britons and protestants. And I was not surprised at the event, by which

I thought the Lord poured contempt upon it. I hope we shall never see such a time again, upon such a pretext.

I cannot see that an unprincipled or wicked protestant is a whit better than a bigoted papist. Yet these, of all sorts, are tolerated.

The spirit of the times is quite altered since fires were lighted in Smithfield; and, humanly speaking, I think it morally impossible for things to revert into that channel.

Therefore whatever liberty the papists may obtain by law, that of sitting in parliament chiefly excepted, will give me no pain.

Perhaps if I had lived in Scotland, the opinion of many wise and good men might have outweighed my private judgment, and given it a different bias. The Jews, while a separate people and under a theocracy, had a peculiar rule, the application of which to christian societies, I think has been productive of much mischief and misery; and quite unsupported, as I judge, by any precept or precedent in the new testament.

I have only time to add my best wishes. The Lord bless you, and bless us all with his precious peace, and that philanthropy which his example teaches. I am

Your sincere friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER X.

London, August 1, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I PURPOSE, if the Lord please, to leave London the 8th instant, for a few weeks. I go into Hampshire, but letters sent in the usual way will follow me, wherever I may be. I would first thank you for your last agreeable letter with the account of **** and ****, and the copy of his letter, which is a very good one indeed.

Mr. G——r informed me himself of his happy relief. I have not written to him since, but I sent him my congratulations in one I wrote to Mr. Black.

I believe the *Letters to a Wife by the Author of Cardiphonia*, printed for J. Johnson, will be published in a few days, perhaps within a fortnight. I beg you to pray for the Lord's blessing upon them. Both Ebenezer, and the last copy of verses which I sent you, will be in an appendix. But if you choose to print any of the latter, I have no objection, provided, like the former, they may not be sold.

A lady of my acquaintance here, who I believe was much more distressed than Mr. G——r, has been relieved. She was in a state of despair for eight years, all which time she was never out of bed, but to have it made. She lay, till by dis-

ease, she had lost the use of her legs, and could stand no more than an infant. She is now cheerful and comfortable, and can walk from her house to my church (the distance is near a mile.) So true it is, that our Lord is able to save unto the uttermost. Mr. ——'s case is singular, and so, in a different way, is mine. We are proofs, not easily set aside, that grace reigns.

Dr. Robertson had great talents, and a great name in the world, but I doubt not but he saw at last, he might have been more useful as a minister, than as a historian. It is a poor thing to gain the applause of men. One page of John Bunyan is of more real value than many volumes of high estimation in the judgment of those who know not the worth of the soul.

I commend you to the Lord—and remain

Your affectionate friend, &c.

J. N.

LETTER XI.

SOUTHAMPTON, September 2, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I THANK you for providing for me in my retirement. Your anecdotes are both entertaining and instructive. Your letter followed me hither. Like you I highly relish the country; but I am better off in point of ordinances and christian conference than you were when on the

banks of the Tweed. The preaching of the gospel is indeed a great privilege, which cannot be safely neglected while in our power, and will not, so long as we possess our spiritual senses. But if sickness, or clear providential calls of absence, detain us from it, we are not so absolutely dependent upon it, but that we may do well without it. Perhaps none of David's psalms breathe a more sublime and spiritual strain of devotion, than those which he wrote in the wilderness: such were the 42d, 63d, and perhaps the 84th. The occasion of his writing the 51st happened at Jerusalem, when he was at the fountain-head of public means. And I think my heart was never more warm and fixed, than during my two last voyages to Africa, though I was engaged in a traffic, which *I now see* was unlawful and abominable. The word of grace, and the throne of grace, are the two principal means, which can supply the want of all others, when not to be had: but without attending to these, the rest can yield but little solid benefit. I have met with happy, lively believers, who have had no opportunity for hearing the gospel; and I have met with others, who, like Pharaoh's lean kine, devour a great deal, but do not appear to thrive.

I think, if I was a lawgiver, I would not make robbery a capital crime; and therefore I should be unwilling to prosecute for it. Many of our penal

laws, by being too severe, become too remiss, offenders are so often pardoned, that others are encouraged to offend, in hopes that the prescribed punishment will not be inflicted. The law of God requires murderers to be put to death, and I think there are other crimes, which by their effects might be fatal, that may be forbidden under the same penalty; such as house-breaking in the night—setting houses on fire, in a street or town—perjury in criminal causes—and perhaps I might add, the stealing of a child, which may be of dreadful consequence both to the child and to the parents, and yet I believe does not expose to worse punishment than the stealing of a dog. But as I have no hand in making laws, nor influence with the legislature, I must be content to take things as I find them. I only give you my sentiments because you desire me. There is a verse in Dr. Watts's little book for children, which offers a good pattern to me who am in my 69th year:—

> "I'll not willingly offend,
> "Nor be easily offended,
> "What's amiss (in myself) I'll try to mend,
> "And endure what can't be mended."

These principles I would adopt in my politics, I am thankful that the French were checked in their mad design of fraternizing and plundering all the nations far and near. But had I the rule of affairs, when I had cooped them up within

their own boundaries, I would have left them to fight it out among themselves. But we are sinners also, and therefore what the Lord has permitted to take place, must be, and what he has appointed to follow, must come. My heart aches for the final issue. But as he reigns over all, he can, and he will, make all work for the glory of his name, and in the mean time, he knows how to support, or to protect his own people. "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him." May we be found as those in Ezek. ix. 4. and his invisible mark will secure us from real harm.

I have not properly more leisure when abroad, than when at home. For besides the time taken up in moving from place to place, and in seeing and being seen, by old and new friends, I have generally a double quantity of letters to answer. But I am willing to shew that I value your correspondence.

I am with dear friends, in a retirement about two miles from Southampton. I believe the situation is not less pleasant than what you have seen in Kent. I preach three or four times a week in my friend's house, to 100 or more people.

I have a letter from Dr. Robbins of Plymouth in Massachusetts, whose name I never heard of before. I wish I could show it you. He gives an account of a sudden revival of religion in this

place, much like that you had from Bala. It began since Christmas last, at a time when every thing seemed dead or declining around him. He has been minister there upwards of thirty years. He writes like a good old soldier. Thus, in different places, the wall of Zion is building up in these troublous times. The Lord has not forsaken the earth, bad as it is.

In London we have abundance of the gospel, and perhaps it never was more clearly and practically preached. But we may lament with you the want of more accompanying power. However, good is done, and perhaps we are as much favoured, in this respect, at St. Mary's, as in most places, and we have the blessing of peace and unanimity—and I can see several persons in the assembly, who I believe would have been judged eminent christians had they lived in the apostles' days.

I pray the Lord to bless you in all things, and hope we shall have a share in your prayers. I hope to be at home in about three weeks, if nothing unforeseen should require my return sooner. I am

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER XII.

LONDON, October 19, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I SHOULD have informed you sooner of the price of the books, had I not called on Mr. J***, and found him just then writing to you. Indeed I am much in your debt for your amusing and instructive communications. I must not say, "have patience with me and I will pay you all." I am nearly an insolvent in correspondence, and fear I shall hardly pay you a composition of two shillings in the pound. Nor do I consider this as any part of payment. I send it to introduce to you Mr. F***, who brought me a letter of introduction from Mr. B***. From the short acquaintance I have had with him, I judge you will like him. I cannot doubt your readiness to do him any good offices in your power—at first for my sake, and afterwards for his own.

We came home safe and well from our late agreeable tour on the 27th ultimo, and found all safe and well at home. I must defer an account of the goodness and mercy which followed us all the days and hours we were abroad, as two gentlemen are come in to breakfast, and perhaps there may be two more by the time I can subscribe myself,

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XIII.

LONDON, December 17, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

IF I do not thank you immediately, I shall perhaps have to double my apology. The truth is, that before I can write one letter, I receive two, some of which must be answered directly. So that I am likely always to be sadly behind hand; and my promptness and agility in despatching business does not increase with my years. I believe I have now more than fifty unanswered by me; so that if I am more tardy than I could wish in paying what I owe to you, I must beg you to accept the will for the deed.

You thank me for sending Mr. A*** and Mr. F***, and I thank you for the kindness you shewed them at my recommendation. I did not doubt but they would recommend themselves when once introduced. I take the liberty to constitute you my agent at Edinburgh, and shall not scruple to make you more remittances in this way, when in my power. I hope I shall send you none but what will be worth your acceptance. I likewise solicit your agency in return, and shall gladly receive all whom you recommend. My love to Mr. S***; I shall be glad to see him again: but he must tell me his name, for I have already lost the idea of his person. I see many people, and my head is more than 68 years old.

My heart went a little pit-a-pat when I read about your famous convention. I am thankful they are dispersed. If sin does not give success to their designs, they are too wild and visionary to succeed. But the Lord when displeased can execute his judgments by improbable means. Sin can fan a small spark into a fierce and wide spreading flame. But as his gospel is spreading, as the number of his praying people are not few, and as he has lately appeared for us more than once, I hope that though we may be chastened, we shall not be destroyed. At the worst, they who trust in him have no just cause to fear, "though the earth were shaken, and the mountains should sink into the sea"—and he expressly tells us not to be terrified "when we hear of wars and tumults." Psal. xlvi. 1, 2. cxii. 7. Luke xxi. 9.

When we really feel our need of a revival, it is a sign that we are already in a measure revived. The grand symptom of a decline is insensibility. When Ephraim has gray hairs (the mark of the leprosy, Lev. xiii. 20—25.) here and there upon him, and knoweth it not, Hosea vii. 9. But indeed we all need reviving in our persons, families, religious societies, and in the nations. We pray for it, and perhaps the Lord is about to answer our prayers, by the very things which we are afraid of. The building of the wall may be carried on most prosperously, in

troublous times. And whatever report flesh and sense may make, faith will allow, that those must be the best times, when the best cause flourishes most. It is to be hoped that many have been taught by famine, sword or pestilence, after they had long heard the gospel in vain.

I could tattle on, but my time will not permit.

My love to Mr. A*** and to Mr. F***. I thank the latter for his letter, and hope to write to him before it comes in his turn; but I cannot yet.

The 15th December falling this year on the Lord's day, I preached a sort of second funeral sermon from 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. O that word of the Lord! It is a balm for every wound, a substitute for every loss! But for this word, I had sunk and perished in my affliction. But though I was happy with her, I am not unhappy without her. Praise the Lord on my behalf, and continue to pray for me; I will, as I am enabled, repay you in the same way.

The Lord bless you in body, soul, and spirit, and in your affairs and connexions. Amen.

I am

Your assured and obliged friend,

J. N.

LETTER XIV.

London, January 4, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

I MUST put you off for the present. My little leisure has been wholly exhausted in writing the two letters which I now enclose to your care.

If the third song* I send is worthy your notice, you are quite at liberty to do with it as you please. I believe it is the last I shall attempt to sing upon the occasion.

Miss C*** and I are still favoured with good health. The new year is begun. It will probably prove an eventful one. But the Lord reigns, and it shall be well with them that fear and trust in him. May it prove a happy year to you. If we are kept close to him, it may be the happiest year we have seen, however things may go in the world abroad, Psal. xlvi. 1, 2. Let us meet often at a throne of grace.

I am

Your very affectionate,

J. N.

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* Third anniversary of Mrs. Newton's death.

LETTER XV.

London, January 7, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

THE minute after I had sent off my letter to you, I received yours of the 1st, which I should not have acknowledged so soon, but to assure you, that the rumour of my having altered my sentiments of the revival in Wales is entirely unfounded. When Mr. C*** was in London, he told me, that what appeared sudden and extraordinary in the affair, was in great measure subsided, and that some who were affected, they knew not well why, were returning to their former level; but that he hoped the revival itself was in the main solid, extensive, and abiding. This is as much as I expected, and this is all I have known of the matter since Mr. C. wrote to you. Therefore, my sentiment, that many blossoms would fall off, and my hope that many would abide, and yield good fruit, remain still the same.

I thank you for your information respecting Letters to a Wife. You will perceive by the preface, that I was aware of the different opinions which would be formed of a book rather novel in its kind. None but married persons can be competent judges of the subject: nor all of these. The unfeeling, the careless, and the

licentious, will think it rhapsody and folly. But as I said, if my leading motive was right, I ought to be in good measure indifferent to the judgment of mortals. To be sure, it was a high gratification to me to erect a monument of affection and gratitude to the memory of my excellent wife: but had this been my only view, I durst not have done it. I intended it chiefly as a memorial of the Lord's goodness to a chief sinner; to confirm the account given in my narrative, and to record many additional instances of his wonderful providences in my favour. I thought likewise it would afford proof, that there may be a degree of conscientious regard to the Lord, of submission to his will, of dependence upon his care, and of answers to prayer, in a person whose doctrinal light is very indistinct, and before he has formed a systematic and clear view of the truth. Indeed, though my knowledge was at that time, more defective than it is even now, some of the happiest days of communion with God I ever knew, were while I was a sailor, and particularly in my third and last voyage to Africa. Indeed I wish I had a right to say, I can trust him as simply at present as I did then.

I felt a desire of publishing some extracts of my letters to her, from the day that she left me, and perhaps sooner. But I deliberated upon it a whole year before I undertook it. I submitted it frequently to the Lord; and from the time I

began, I believe I may say, there was not a page of it written without prayer for his direction and guidance. I hope he inclined me to begin, I am sure he has enabled me to finish; for though it was in the main a pleasing task, it was *painfully* pleasing. It cost me not only prayers, but tears. I thank him that it is now abroad. I trust I shall never repent of it; I rather expect it will be a source of comfort to me to the end of life, that I was spared to complete it.

With respect to others, I hoped it might be read with some pleasure, and perhaps benefit, by some, who like me, have outlived their gourds. That I might put useful hints in the way of some who are about to enter into the marriage state. That it might undeceive some who have imbibed prejudices against marriage, and convince them that there is more satisfaction to be found in that state, when properly conducted, than they are aware of. I hoped likewise, that others might be cautioned by my example against that over-attachment, which sometimes cost me so dear. And I hope and believe, that when the Lord shall have shewn you the proper person appointed to bear your name, and has brought you together, you will not regret the time you spent in reading Letters to a Wife.

The history of my trial in the Appendix, No. 1. is to me the most interesting part. When I re-

flect (which is but every day) how I lived, what I felt, and how I was supported, it seems the most remarkable part of my remarkable life. Surely had not the Lord been my helper, I had sunk like a stone in deep water. I thank him, that I *could* bear such a testimony to his faithfulness and all-sufficiency.

I have been already favoured with notices that my book has been useful in most or all the cases I have mentioned; and therefore I am not afraid of the censure of severe critics.

Paper and leisure are brought to a close together. I can only add my love and best wishes, with an assurance that I am

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XVI.

London, April 29, 1794.

INDEED, my dear Sir, I must not apologize to *you*, for you are served much oftener than comes to your turn. I have at present about sixty unanswered letters, and while I am writing one, I usually receive two, so that I am likely to die much in debt. I have many dear friends to whom I cannot write for a year or two, or longer, though perhaps I am forced to write to those whom I never saw. But *you* are not likely

to be omitted long, because you repay me with interest.

Please to tell Miss G***, that I thank her for her obliging letters. She asks my sentiments on the times. She may see them in print, if the Fast Sermon I lately printed should reach Edinburgh.

Cardiphonia is made up of letters which were actually written to my friends, and were returned to me that they might be printed. Such additions as you propose would not suit Cardiphonia, for I could not write confidential letters, which I intended, at the time, should appear in print. I ascribe the blessing the Lord has given to Cardiphonia chiefly to this circumstance, that there was not a line written with the least thought that it would ever appear in public. There might be an addition to Omicron in the manner you mention, but I have no time for it; and, indeed, I have already printed enough for one.

I lately received three volumes of Mr. Riccalton of Hobkirk, sent, as I understand, by his son, who is the publisher; and I am informed he has suffered by their not selling. It is a wonder to me that they have not found a ready sale. Only, I am told, there were but two of the three volumes sent to London, and therefore I suppose people were not eager to buy an incomplete work. I think if they were all three in our

London shops, and advertised a little, they would soon be called for. I seldom meet with a human writer, to whose judgment I can implicitly subscribe in all points. But upon the whole these books have pleased me highly, and I think have thrown light upon some particulars which I did not so well understand before I read them. I never heard of them before, though they were printed in the year 1772.

Your sorrowful complaints have often been mine; if they are not so now, it is not because I feel less ground for them, but because, as I hope, I am more acquainted with the remedy provided against them. I see much, daily, continual, cause for humiliation, whether I look backward or inward. But if it be true that Jesus lived and died for sinners, and is now a High Priest upon the throne—if he really said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in NO WISE cast out"—if he meant what he said—if his word may be taken—and if he be able to make it good—then I can see no just cause for distress. The sum of my complaints amounts but to this—that I am a sick sinner, diseased in every part; but then, if He who is the infallible Physician has undertaken my case, I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord. I have no remarkable experience to talk of; I never was like Paul, at any difficulty to tell whether I was in the body or out

of the body; I am burdened with a body of sin and death. But I have a little book, which I am enabled to believe is the sure word of God. The doctrines and promises I meet with in it, which we call the gospel, exactly suit my wants, and the temper and conduct it is designed to form, agrees with my leading desires. I was once far otherwise minded, and should doubtless have remained so, had not almighty power and mercy softened me. I would therefore praise him for what he has done, and wait upon him to do more, for I can do nothing for myself. In the mean time, instead of complaining, I would try to be thankful. If he has begun a good work, I dare not indulge a doubt of his carrying it on. This would be to dishonour his wisdom, power, and faithfulness.

For the rest; if the scripture describes the christian life as a warfare and a wrestling, why should I be discouraged that I find it so? The apostle says of all believers, "the flesh striveth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;" if it was otherwise with me, how could I be right?

Give my love to Mr. F***. I might say the same things to him. We have all need of patience. We hope to overcome at last. But I can form no idea of two hills without thinking of a valley between them, nor of a victory without a previous conflict.

I commend you and yours to the great and sure *Cautioner*,* and I remain

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XVII.

LONDON, August 1, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

I TAKE a large sheet, but perhaps if I keep it till I have filled it, I shall tire your patience, both in waiting for my letter, and in reading it afterwards.

We, that is Miss C*** and I, left home the 17th June, and returned in peace and safety the 24th ult. Yours of the 3d found me at Cambridge. Give my love to Mr. Black. I hope his removal to Edinburgh will prove a blessing to many; and that in watering others he may be abundantly watered himself. I am glad you have good news from what you call the east country. May the gospel spread east, west, north, and south, till every part of this land, and all the lands and nations of the earth are filled with light and love.

I have seen many of Mr. B——'s and Th—'s letters; and perhaps those which you have. Mr.

* Or Surety.

B*** was a first rate man, both as a minister and a christian: but he could not easily restrain his natural turn for humour and drollery. This was certainly a blemish, especially when he brought it into the pulpit. But though he was sensible of the impropriety, in his latter years, and often acknowledged it, he was frequently drawn into a repetition—what made it worse, his taste was far from delicate. His allusions, though generally apposite, were often low and vulgar, and disgusting even to his friends: but, as we say, there are spots even in the best. He was, upon the whole, a burning and a shining light. Mr. Whitfield likewise could say comical things; but then it was in a manner quite his own, in which none of his imitators could succeed. When he made his hearers smile, it was usually with a design to make them weep, and I have more than once seen these different effects produced in almost the same minute.

My narrative is indeed imperfect: but I think Letters to a Wife will serve both as a commentary, and a supplement to it. Mr. Self seems to have obtruded sufficiently upon the attention of the public already: I am not willing to introduce him again.

In preferring a warm heart to a clear head, you certainly judge by the rule of scripture. *The Lord looketh to the heart*, not to the stature, the address, the intellect, the rank or wealth of a

person. These are to the man no more than the trappings to a horse, which is the same animal, whether laden with panniers, or dressed in a fine caparison. So, at the theatre, people do not admire an actor merely for the character he sustains, but for the manner in which he performs it. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof like the flowers of the field. The mass of mankind may be compared to grass, and those who are distinguished by intellectual or external accomplishments of any kind, to the flowers, which look more gaudy, and are perhaps a little taller than the grass: but when the mower comes, the scythe finds no difference; both fall by the same stroke, and wither with equal speed. Indeed, I believe, the most lively grace, and the most solid comfort, are known among the Lord's poor and undistinguished people. Every outward advantage has a tendency to nourish the pride of the human heart, and requires a proportionable knowledge of the deceitful self and the evil of sin to counterbalance them. It is no less difficult to have great abilities, than great riches, without trusting in them. And believers who are remarkably sensible and clever, are frequently teazed with whims and vagaries of thought, which do not trouble plain people. If I was qualified to search out the best christian in the kingdom, I should not expect to find him either in a professor's chair or in a pulpit. I should give the

palm to that person who had the lowest thoughts of himself, and the most admiring and cordial thoughts of the Saviour. And perhaps this person may be some bed-ridden old man or woman, or a pauper in a parish workhouse. But our regard to the Lord is not to be measured by our sinsible feelings, by what we can say or write, but rather by the simplicity of our dependence, and the uniform tenor of our obedience to his will.

I believe there are many good people at ****. But I thought them too hasty in their determination to build, and that the plan they proposed, as mentioned to me, was not likely to settle them comfortably. I did not approve, and therefore I did not encourage it. I have often seen young and warm zeal lead to inconveniencies. In these points we must judge for ourselves, as appearances strike us. But I trust I wish equally well to the gospel, whether it be preached in a church, a chapel, a kirk, a meeting-house, or a barn; and whether the preachers are of the English or Scotch Establishments, Seceders, Relief-men, or Methodists.

I am sorry for Mr. ****, and for many more, who would do better if they consulted the rule of God's word. Some well-meaning people, seduced by those of deeper views, I compare to children playing with gunpowder, who are sometimes blown up before they are aware of danger.

They are happy who study to be quiet, to promote peace, and to persuade those whom they can influence, to seek an interest in the kingdom which cannot be shaken.

I have now taken some notice of every paragraph in your letter. Have little to add from my own stock. Our late excursion was very pleasant. We were chiefly at and round about Cambridge, at no time more than 62 miles from London. We saw many friends, and received much kindness. I preached while abroad in ten churches, nine of them in different places, besides many house-preachings. I found in most of these parishes, active, faithful ministers, and attentive congregations. The gospel certainly spreads in the Establishment. Young men of abilities and piety are ordained every season, and there are four seasons in the year, and we now and then hear of clergymen awakened, after they had been blind teachers of the blind for many years. In London we are highly favoured with many ministers of the first rank for zeal and wisdom. Such there are likewise in some of our great towns, such as Leicester, Birmingham, Leeds, Halifax, York, Hull, Reading; and I hope there are several hundreds settled in places of less note, in different parts of the kingdom, who are diligent and useful. Add to this, the itinerants in town and country, in Mr. Whitfield's, Wesley's, and Lady Huntingdon's departments,

amongst whom, though they are not all alike, there are many faithful good preachers, and many of the evangelical dissenters—and I think we may hope that real religion is greatly on the spread and revival amongst us. This, I trust, is a token for good (I fear almost the only one) in this dark and threatening day. The bulk of the nation is asleep in sin. Infidelity, folly, and dissipation, abound every where: but the Lord has a praying people, who are mourning for the evils they cannot prevent, and the miseries which are the fruits of sin. These, I hope, would appear a large number, if they could be brought all together: but scattered as they are up and down, they are *one in him;* and, for their sakes, I hope our civil and religious privileges, so little prized, so much undervalued by the majority, will be still preserved to us.

I know not if I mentioned Mr. Fuller's book, "The Tendency of the Calvinistic and Socinian Doctrines compared as to Morals:" but I suppose you must have seen it. I think it the most complete unanswerable refutation of the Socinian scheme, and the best book of controversy I ever saw. The great learned Doctors dodged Dr. Priestley about in Greek and Latin to little purpose: it was reserved to Mr. Fuller to cut off this great Goliath's head. I think there is none of the party hardy enough to attempt to answer it.

On Monday next, if I live, I shall enter my 70th year. The time of my dismission cannot be very distant. Pray for me, that whenever it comes it may find me waiting, willing, and ready. That my decline in life (if I am not called away suddenly) may be honourable, and consistent with my profession. That I may live as becometh a saint, and die as becometh a sinner, with no other plea or hope, but that Jesus lived and died, and rose and reigns, to save to the uttermost those who put their trust in him.

Let the length and speed of this letter plead for me, if I should seem dilatory hereafter. I shall not forget you, but I cannot write when I would. I commend you to the Lord, may he guide, guard, and bless you, and make you a blessing to all your connexions I only add, that I am sincerely,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER XVIII.

London, November 26, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

I TAKE a whole sheet, for I have a large packet to answer. I date the top, but what date the bottom may bear is yet unknown.

I do not wonder that Moses would have been willing to wait a little longer for heaven, to have

seen Israel established in Canaan, though he was sure it would be so after his decease. God has in mercy so constituted the human frame, as to produce an engagement of heart in necessary affairs, so that we are not only *employed* in his service, but *interested* in what he appoints us to do. Because it is *his* concern, it becomes *our own*. This wonderfully sweetens labour, and likewise keeps up that attention and exertion, which are necessary to our doing things as well as we can. Perhaps you have known parents who seemed very willing to go to heaven (if it were the Lord's time) and yet not unwilling to live a little longer to see a dear child comfortably settled before they went. Surely the object of Moses's desire was as noble and important as any thing that we can propose on earth now. Moses loved Israel, and longed to see them settled, but when the Lord forbad it, he cheerfully acquiesced.

Abraham was, as you observe, a great man; yet he was but a man. We may admire his faith and obedience, for the bible commends them, and holds him forth to us as a pattern; yet he had no more inherent, or properly his own, than you or I. When left a little to himself, this great believer stooped to equivocation and falsehood to save his life, when it was, in reality, in no danger. Let us learn a lesson from him in this case likewise, not to presume upon our past experience

upon the grace or comfort of yesterday, as though these could warrant our standing to-morrow. We cannot see by the light of yesterday, nor subsist long upon yesterday's food. We need continual supplies, help every moment. Therefore let us not be high-minded, but fear. So long as we feel our weakness, and lean upon an almighty arm, we are safe, but no longer.

I think Bucer's answer to his judges, "that he did not wear a square hat, because he had not a square head," was more smart than solid, if college caps then were like those worn now; for though the outside of the cap is of a square form, the crown is quite as round, and as shapeable to the head as the crown of your three-corned hat.

The profanation of the Lord's day is undoubtedly a great sin. But many sin through ignorance. They have neither good example to lead them to church, nor good instruction when they go. It is one of the many crying sins, which form our national character. But I do not think it is the loudest. And I think the guilt of it lies heavily on the *great*, the *magistrates*, and the *clergy*. If the hungry sheep look up, they are not fed, or the places where there is food for them are very few. When I see multitudes customarily breaking the sabbath, I think such was my practice once; and I hope some of you will know better before you die. I obtained mercy,

Grace reigned in my case, and grace is still upon the throne!

I have known more instances than one of dreams resembling Mrs. Tooley's, and they are worth recording when verified by the event; but this is not always the case. Dreams are to me a sufficient proof, first, that we are surrounded by visible agents, and liable to impressions from them when our senses are asleep, and perhaps when they are indisposed by nervous disorders, but not when we are in perfect health, or distinctly awake. N. B. It is a great mercy that some of these agents are under a restraint, or we should be scared by dreams and terrified by visions every night! Second, I infer from dreams, that there is a power belonging to the mind, adapted to the unseen state, which though dormant when we are awake, is active in sleep. Then we seem to perceive by *intuition*. We are engaged in scenes we had no consciousness of before, and yet we know all that is going forward, take a part in the business, and are engaged and interested as if we were quite at home. This appears very wonderful to me. I think we know very little of our own powers at present. Third, Though some dreams are important, perhaps monitory, perhaps prophetical, as I believe that mentioned in my narrative was; yet there is so much uncertainty in their general character, that we should be cautious of laying much stress upon

them, at the time. I had once a young lady a month at my house, who had the singular faculty of dreaming that she heard a sermon every night; and she usually told us the text, the heads, and much of the discourse at breakfast. The preacher was sometimes one whom she knew, and sometimes an utter stranger. But when she married, she lost her gift; and, poor thing, she has since met with many things which she never dreamed of.

Now for Mr. ****. His case is a strong proof of the power of habit. How else could he have been afraid to shorten his prayers, when the general voice of his people pronounced them too long? He knew the gospel too well to expect to be heard for his much speaking. I think very long prayers more blameable than long sermons. A peculiar attention is due when speaking to the Most High; and if the attention be overstrained by the length of the service, it is lost time to the hearer. Weariness of mind in prayer, and the thought still returning—When will you have done? is worse than unpleasant, especially to persons of weak judgment, who charge their consciences with guilt, for the speaker's indiscretion.

The holiness of sinners and angels, which you seem to compare, differ not only in degree, but also in kind. A hare or a greyhound can run swiftly, but they cannot fly like an eagle, had

they been made to fly they would have had wings. We hope to be as the angels before long, but at present, in our compound state of spirit and matter, the distinction between us and them is no less real than between birds and beasts. The holiness of a sinner consists chiefly of low thoughts of self, and high thoughts of the Saviour. These will always be in proportion. The lower we appear to ourselves, the more highly we shall esteem him. The more his glory strikes us, the more we shall sink in our own eyes. Could you find the man who has most of these properties, you would find the most holy man upon earth. And as we advance in these, we shall, in the same degree, attain to every thing else that properly belongs to holiness. Why are we liable to anger, pride, positiveness, and other evil tempers? but because we think too highly of ourselves, and suppose we are not treated as we ought to be. Why are we so apt to be captivated with the gewgaws of the world? but because we are so faintly impressed with a real sense of the excellence of Jesus. We say indeed that his loving-kindness is better than life, but if we really and fully thought so, hard things would be easy, and bitter sweet, and there would be no room for impatience or discontent in our hearts. But alas! all within us, and all around us, is defective and polluted!

The death of Mr. Y***, and of many others who are daily removed, are encouragements to us to trust the Lord when our call shall come. They who are born of God belong to his heavenly kingdom. They who are not, belong, at least for the present, to the kingdom of the wicked one. Neither the one nor the other, while in the body, can have a full perception of what awaits them; but, at the approach of death the respective scenes begin to open.*

> 'The soul's dark cottage, tatter'd and decay'd,
> Lets in new light through chinks———'

It is not necessary to suppose that the believer upon his dying bed is, strictly speaking, *better* than the believers who are around him, listening with admiration to his words; but now he stands upon the threshold of glory, he sees more, and therefore he can say more than he did formerly.

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* Mr. Y*** was converted under the ministry of Mr Whitfield, and lived a humble, consistent christian, to the age of fourscore. His faculties latterly were so impaired that he neither knew his wife, nor his most intimate acquaintance when they called on him. He said much during his last days, and the manner and matter of his sayings indicated that he thought himself in heaven, in the immediate presence of his God and Saviour. In health he conversed but little upon any subject; but in his last illness he spoke much to the honour of God, and to the comfort and joy of those around him. His last words were "My King! my Lord!"

And often the impenitent sinner before his departure has such discoveries as terrify not only himself, but all who are about him: but what passes within the curtains seldom transpires abroad. We observe that christians who walk uprightly and humbly, generally express the same feelings when they come to die; or rather they give intimations of views and feelings which they find no words to express.

Now I will tell you a story. It was in the newspaper some years ago; but possibly you may not have heard it.

A German prince, travelling through France, visited the arsenal at Toulon, where the gallies are kept. The commandant, as a compliment to his rank, said, he was welcome to set any one galley slave at liberty, whom he should choose to select. The prince, willing to make the best use of this privilege, spoke to many of them in succession, inquiring why they were condemned to the gallies. Injustice, oppression, false accusation, were the only causes they could assign—they were all innocent and ill-treated. At last he came to one, who when asked the same question, answered to this effect. "My Lord, I have no reason to complain. I have been a very wicked desperate wretch. I have often deserved to be broken alive upon the wheel. I account it a great mercy that I am here." The prince fixed his eyes upon him, gave him a gentle blow upon

the head, and said, "You wicked wretch, it is a pity you should be placed among so many honest men; by your own confession you are bad enough to corrupt them all, but you shall not stay with them another day." Then turning to the officer, he said, "This is the man, Sir, whom I wish to be released."

Was not this a wise decision: Must not all who hear the story allow, that the man who was so sensible of his guilt, and so submissive to his punishment was, in all probability, the most worthy of pardon, and the most likely not to abuse it? Though the ways of God and his thoughts are higher than ours, yet upon some occasions, and when their own concerns are not in question, men, by their judgments, shew that they can form no just objections to his.

Think of me if we live to the 15th December,* It stands first in the list of my memorable days. It calls me to the special exercise of humiliation and praise. Not that the subject is out of my thoughts the year round. The Lord's goodness, and my own folly and ingratitude, during a course of forty years, suggest matter for daily meditation. The four years since my bereavement have been more free from snares and cares than any former period of my life; and therefore I ought to number them among the

* Anniversary of Mrs. Newton's death.

happiest I have seen. Blessed be his name, who can make losses gains, and cause comforts to spring from our crosses. For the rest, the Lord deals so bountifully with me, that I have not a wish to form. I have health, peace, plenty, friends, acceptance; I can still preach, and have reason to hope I am useful. I am very happy in domestic life, so that I still find home is home. What can I desire more? Through mercy, I know and feel that the world can offer nothing to amend my situation. The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place. He who brought me out of the house of bondage in Africa, has dealt well with me in the wilderness! How wonderfully has he led me about, and kept me as the apple of his eye!

But I am drawing near 70, and cannot be far from Jordan. I am at present willing to live; and I trust when the time comes, the Lord will make me willing to die. It is easy to talk of death while he is at a distance. But I rely upon his promise of strength according to the day, to enable me to meet him with composure. Let us pray for grace to live to-day, and to leave to-morrow at his wise disposal. I commend you to his blessing. I am

Your affectionate friend,

J. N.

28 Nov.

LETTER XIX.

LONDON, December 10, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

* * * * * * *

We have no reason to be much grieved, if the world speaks any or all manner of evil of us, provided it be falsely, and especially if it be on account of our christian profession. Rather we may rejoice, for so they treated the prophets and apostles that were before us, yea, our Lord himself. Jer. xxxvii. 14. Acts xxiv. 5. Luke xxiii. 5. We may apply Peter's words, 1 Pet. ii. 20. I think with you, that considering what a world we live in, the preservation of our characters is no less an evidence of the Lord's providential care over us, than the preservation of our persons from the many harms to which we are daily exposed.

Mr. ****'s letter is, as you say, a curiosity: I hope it is the only one of the kind that I shall have occasion to see. However, if the event of his last misconduct was sanctified to bring his heart back to the Lord, it is well with him now. I think we have warrant to hope that his faith and repentance were sincere. If we have not all deserved to be hanged for breaking human laws, we have all deserved much worse as transgressors

of the law of our nature. The way to heaven sometimes lies by the gallows, and I fear that the path from a bed of state much more frequently tends downwards. For my own part, if my pocket was full of stones, I have no right to throw one at the greatest backslider upon earth. I have either done as bad or worse than he, or I certainly should, if the Lord had left me a little to myself; for I am made of just the same materials: if there be any difference, it is wholly of grace.

I pray the Lord to bless you in all things.

I am

Your affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XX.

LONDON, January 17, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

I CAN say but little to you at present. This comes chiefly to cover my fourth anniversary, which is quite at your service. You will hardly admire the poetry, but it is true.

I differ from some of your friends about Mr. W***; nor do I think a whit worse of him (now I have read his confession) for his misconduct. I have no reason to doubt his veracity, nor can see why the truth should be concealed. Does not his whole case say, "Let him that thinketh

he standeth take heed lest he fall?" Have any of us a stock of *inherent* grace sufficient to secure us from equal and greater miscarriages? Who can equal the fervour and spirituality of David's mind as expressed in Psal. xlii. lxiii. and lxxxiv? yet how base and complicated were his crimes in the affair of Bathsheba. It was written for our instruction; and similar declensions, with their awful consequences, are permitted for our instruction and warning to this day. The Lord preserve us in so resting in past experiences, as to go forth as supposing ourselves wise and good! I hope I shall never dare to think myself out of equal danger, an hour longer than I feel the necessity of praying, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe," and not otherwise.

It should excite lamentation, when a believer gives occasion for the way of truth to be evil spoken of; but if the heart be so deceitful and desperately wicked as the scripture declares, I rather wonder it does not happen more frequently. When Jude says "To *him who is able* to keep you from falling," we know that he means the Lord, and his expression intimates, that no power less than that which keeps the planets in their orbits, can preserve us from dreadful things for a single day. Through great mercy I have been thus kept as to my character before men; but I can remember many turns in my experience, when, if the Lord had not watched over me when

I was sleeping, I might have proved very vile indeed. More than once, he permitted my enemy to rob me of my spear and cruse, my strength and my comfort, by which I know to whom I owe it that I am alive at this day.

I know nothing of S. Vincent's, but you were certainly misinformed about Antigua. There the gospel is protected and flourishes greatly. The Moravian brethren have there near 8000 enlightened blacks under their care, whose behaviour is such, that a slave under their tuition will fetch double the price of another. It is the same in the Danish islands St. Cruz and St. Thomas, where they have still a greater number, and they have begun a good and prosperous work at St. Christopher's. Some of Mr. Wesley's preachers are likewise useful in our islands; but the Moravians seem almost to engross the true missionary spirit. If you read the history of the missions in North America, lately published, you will see such instances of simplicity, self-denial, wisdom, courage, patience, perseverance, and success, and so likewise in Crantz's History of the Greenland Mission, as I think cannot be equalled in any age, or by any people since the apostolic day, excepting Mr. Brainerd, and a few others, from New-England. It is easy to form *missions*, but the Lord alone can form *true missionaries*.

My time is gone when I have commended you to the Lord's blessing, and desired you to

give my love to all that love the Saviour, and that think of me for his sake.

I am

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XXI.

London, February 28, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

HOW one thing hangs upon another! The French revolution has produced a revolution in the franking business. I suppose this is the last frank that will pass between Scotland and me. My next letter per post will cost you money, and therefore I ought to wait till I can send you something worth paying for.

Mr. R*** is a good man, and his Address is a good one. It was much called for. Besides the impression at L***, about ten thousand were printed here. I hope Wednesday was a good day.* The churches, &c. where the gospel is preached, were in general crowded, and I hope the business of the day will be still remembered by *many;* but the majority, I fear, are returning into their old courses. I preached from Psalm cxxiii. 1, 2. and Exodus xvii. 11.

I congratulate you on the visit the Lord favoured you with. Such favours call for a double

* A Fast-Day.

guard of watchfulness and prayer. The pick-pockets are busy about our Bank, when the dividends are paying, and sometimes they who have received a good sum of money have been deprived of it before they returned home: but they seldom attempt to rob a poor man. Thus satan the arch-thief, lets a poor formal professor pass unmolested; but if he sees one whom the Lord has enriched, he watches him with a malicious eye, and longs to spoil him of his treasure. It seems he once formed a plan to rob Paul himself, upon such an occasion, 2 Cor. xii. But the Lord constrained him to send a messenger of his own, to defeat his own design, and to put Paul upon his guard. Messengers from satan, and thorns in the flesh, are *gifts* and mercies, if they preserve us from being exalted above measure. For there is that in our nature which can extract poison even from gracious manifestations and spiritual comforts. A man who has his dividend in his pocket, buttons up close, avoids a crowd, and looks and moves, as if he thought every person he meets may be a thief. Let us imitate them! May the Lord's voice to Peter sound frequently in our ears, "Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." But if we are enabled to walk humbly and circumspectly, we shall walk safely.

The slips and falls (some very great) of the most eminent servants of God, are recorded for

our admonition. Abraham, Lot, Noah, Aaron, David, Solomon, and Hezekiah were not *novices*, but men who had known much of his goodness; and their greatest faults were usually committed just after some signal deliverance, or some singular manifestation, or after they had been honoured by the performance of some important service. Lord, what is man! and what are we! Let us not be high-minded, but fear!

Such extraordinary views of divine things are very desirable, provided we can safely bear them: of which he who knows our frame is the proper judge. They have not been a part of my experience, though, I hope, I likewise rest upon the simple truth: but it is as it *lies in the book*. What I read I am enabled to believe, so far as to venture my soul and my all upon it. And I trust it has some general effect upon my temper, aims, and expectations; but not often much more at one time than another. My walk is chiefly upon even ground. I am seldom greatly elevated, or greatly depressed. I would be thankful for that word of our Lord to Thomas, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." For indeed, in the way of sensible impression, I have seen but very little.

I think the Roman Catholics in Ireland were long treated much like Israel in Egypt. I do not consider their toleration as any way connected with religion; and as a political measure I highly

approve it upon this principle, that I am glad of liberty to worship God according to my light, and therefore am very willing that others should have the same liberty. Toleration, if considered as a matter of favour, is an insult upon conscience, and an intrusion on the prerogative of the Lord of conscience. I should be glad of a toleration to eat, if I might not eat without it; yet I should think it hard if I could not breakfast or dine without the leave of Parliament.

Popery always shewed a persecuting spirit; and therefore when the Protestants got power on their side, as they were unwilling to run the risk of being again called to the honour of suffering for the gospel sake, and equally unable to trust in the providence of God; they entrenched themselves within a bulwark of cruel, unchristian, penal laws. The Jewish nation was a theocracy, and idolatry was not only a sin against God, but a crime against the state, and therefore punishable with death. Protestants availed themselves of this precedent. "Call the papists idolaters, and then you may treat them as you please. Tear away their children from them—hinder them from worshiping God at all. Let any rebellious profligate son claim his father's estate, if he will but renounce popery, he need not have *any* religion: he may be an atheist, provided he promises not to be a Papist. Oppress them as much as you can, and still if you do not murder

them, you may admire your own mercy." I abhor the treatment of the presbyterians in Scotland in Charles II's time; and I do not think much better of the severities against the papists in Ireland.

I did not wonder at the contempt the Lord poured upon the well-meant, but mistaken zeal of the protestant association of the year 1780. Can the Gospel of Christ authorize such things? Are these the fruits of love? Is it thus we do as we would wish to be done by? Surely the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Thus much for the present. I commend you to the care and blessing of the Lord; and with Miss C.'s respects, I subscribe myself,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER XXII.

London, April 17, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

I CANNOT keep pace with your kindness in the article of correspondence, but as franks though sentenced, are not yet executed, I am willing to thank you once more for books, extracts, and letters.

A friend sent £10 for Mr. R*** in consequence of what I had printed. I forwarded it,

and have his answer that he received it safely. I rather expected his help would arise from Scotland than from London.

A *Calvinist* professes that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. If so, we need not wonder that others, who are not favoured like us, cannot see with our eyes. However, if a man be born again, I am content he should call himself an Arminian; and if he be not born again, his Calvinism will do him but little good. I believe there is not a truly awakened Arminian in the world, though many through prejudices of education and connexion, &c. (which we have happily outgrown if ever we had them) deem themselves so. Detach them from their teachers, avoid the Shibboleths and expressions they have been taught to boggle at, and let them pray together, you will find they all say and mean the same things. Religion, my friend, is not a system of sentiments, it is a new nature, a new life, and they who have it, are under divine teaching, and will in due time learn all that the Lord sees it needful for them to know. Some of my frequent hearers, whom I rank among the best of them, would start at the word Calvinist, which therefore they never hear from me; nor the words election or predestination, unless they lie in my text, and then I explain them in an experimental way, and they receive the truths intended, as a young child does milk. They will not allow

themselves to be Calvinists; but they are humble, spiritual, peaceful—they love the Lord and his people—they overcome the world. They are satisfied with me, and I with them.

Some people have a sharp eye, others are near-sighted, but both sorts love the light, and can see by it to walk and work; though good eyes have the advantage in viewing an extensive prospect. It is thus in spirituals. Yet if the heart be upright, we usually grow wiser by years and experience. Thus some who set out Arminians, in the Lord's time become Calvinists; and many who were once speculative and positive, are ripened by age, and become less assuming and dogmatical—learn to bear and forbear; and though they have not changed their sentiments, are strongly suspected by some, because they can love even an Arminian.

A dealer in anecdote should have the scripture touchstone and fan always at hand. I think the story of Pagey, however attested to you, is not quite sterling. The Moravian brethren had many Indian converts. These, all of them loved the Saviour, not because he gave them corn, but because he gave *himself for their sins*, and redeemed them by his bloody death upon the cross. If the voice Pagey heard had convinced him of the depravity of his nature, or told him of the atonement, I should have liked it better. I dare not say what the Lord may or may not do; but I

have no present conception of love without faith, or of faith without some communication of gospel truth and light to the mind.

I think I could match you, and overmatch you on the hand of coldness and wanderings in secret prayer. But in prayer I am to confess my sins and depravity, which I could not honestly do unless I felt them. Nor do I expect to be much better than Paul was, who found that when he would do good, evil was present with him. Farther, if the Lord favours me with some liberty before men, it may be a great mercy that he leaves me to feel in private how little I can do without him. Otherwise, pride might tempt me to consider that as my own, which experience now assures me I only receive, and am dependent entirely upon him for, without whom I can do nothing. You will meet with the sum of all your complaint in the Olney Hymns, book 1. No. 119, which was written long before I heard of you. As face answereth to face in a glass, so the heart of man to man. Your guinea and mine bear the same impression, because they came out of the same mint. When we most feelingly say, "O wretched man that I am!" we may still cheerfully add, "I thank God, through Christ Jesus my Lord." There is a difference in us, according as the Lord is pleased to afford or suspend his power. But in ourselves we are no better at one time than another; for there *dwelleth* in us no good thing.

The eye can see when there is light, but it has no light in itself.

I thought you had seen the sermon I printed on the king's recovery, at the end of which are the verses you mention. The sermons are now out of print, or I would send you one, but Miss C. with her respects, sends you a copy of the hymn. My love to Mr. and Mrs. B***. May the Lord bless their union. Yea I trust he will.

Mrs. Rowe was an excellent woman—she had a warm heart, a lively imagination—she was a poetess. But I confess some of her aspirations are too seraphic for me. Mrs. A***'s Christian Character Exemplified is more to my taste. Give my love to Miss G***: tell her I am in good health, excepting a cold in my head, which has made me for some time almost totally deaf; but I can now hear a little better. But at the age of 70, I must expect mementos that my outward man must decay.

> 'The breaches cheerfully foretell,
> The house must shortly fall.'

Few people have less reason to be weary of life then I; and I trust in him who has promised strength according to the day, that when the time comes I shall not be afraid to die. I seem not to fear death at present, but as yet he is at some distance. If he should open the study door, while I am writing, and beckon me away, I

cannot answer for myself, how I should behave; for it is a very serious transition. But I may say with Dr. Grosvenor, "if the Lord be pleased to smile upon me, I will smile upon death."

With my love to all who love the Saviour, in Edinburgh, Leith, and elsewhere, as they come in your way, and my prayers for your and their best welfare, I remain,

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XXIII.

London, June 5, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE two of yours to thank you for; one of the 21st April, the other the 23d May, by Mr. Struthers, who brought it on Tuesday. I asked him to dinner, but he was engaged. He promised to come again, but I have not seen him since. Burghers, Anti-burghers, Kirk-men, and Relief-men, all are fish that come to my net; and especially those whom you send. Last week I directed a letter to your care for my sister, who I suppose is now at Leith. I wished to give you an opportunity of calling upon her. It is twelve years I believe since I saw her, but I trust you will find her a truly gracious woman.

Neither you nor I know how Paul *preached:* but his writings are designed to be a standing rule

of faith and doctrine to the Church. If he and his brethren had said nothing in their epistles about election and predestination, we should not have so well understood those points, nor had the same authority for maintaining them. Though I think they may be fairly inferred from other parts of scripture, perhaps we could not have made them so well out. But Paul says expressly, that he fed babes, not with *strong meat*, but with *milk*. I think I hardly said that I never mention the words in preaching. When they lie in my text, they make a part of my subject and sermon, but seldom otherwise. I think these doctrines should be in a sermon like sugar in a dish of tea, which sweetens every drop, but is no where to be found in a lump.

I hope you will enjoy the Lord's peace and presence in your new house. It is pleasant to dwell where he dwells, whether in a palace, a cottage, or a prison. Indeed it does not much signify which of the three is our abode, provided he is pleased to be with us. . . . . .

I am not very fond either of assemblies, consistories, synods, councils, benches, or boards. Ministers as individuals in their respective places, are like flowers, which will preserve their colour and scent much longer, if kept singly, than when packed together in a nosegay or posey, for then they quickly fade and corrupt. Their associations, in my judgment, should always be voluntary

and free. Thus there are ten or a dozen of us in London, who frequently meet: we deliberate, ask, and give advice as occasions arise; but the sentiment of one, or even of the whole body, is not binding upon any. We hear what each person has to say, and then, each one judges and acts for himself. Thus, though we sometimes differ in opinion, we always agree, and live in harmony and love. Perhaps it might be a good rule, where spiritual matters are decided by vote, that the minority should determine the point; for in most places the *few* are more likely to be right than the *many*. I can assure you, that however strange some may think it, I am glad, and have much cause to be thankful, that I am what and where I am. I think, with respect to man, we are properly the Independents. The bishops in England interfere with us no more than the bishops in Italy, except in requiring us to appear, and answer to our names, once in three or four years: but no questions are asked, nor any fault found, by our superiors.

I have long thought that we have the same gospel in our hands, which enabled the first christians to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and that the same gospel has still the same power. I am glad you have found it so. I once visited a family that had suffered a great loss by fire. I found the mistress of the house in tears. I said, Madam, I wish you joy. She answered,

What! do you wish me joy of the fire? No, Madam, I wish you joy that you have treasure laid up which the fire cannot reach. This turn stopped her grief; she wiped away her tears and smiled. So the sun breaks through the clouds and shines after an April shower.

Riccalton's works are become very scarce, and yet are much inquired after. C***, the bookseller, wrote to Scotland for many sets, but they could only promise him six, and these, though long expected, are not yet arrived. I put in for one set for a friend, and am sorry I cannot get it. I believe I told you that Mr. Riccalton, son of the author, had written to me about a new edition, which I dissuaded him from, because as he has no copy-right, it was at any person's option to print another, which might spoil the sale of his. I since desired Mr. Eyre (the editor of the Evangelical Magazine) to advise C*** to write Mr. Riccalton for his consent to publish his father's works; for which I thought, especially if he would write a short preface, and here and there some brief notes, he had a right to some pecuniary consideration; and perhaps, in this way, he might recover his copy-right. I am not lawyer enough to be sure of this. But if Mr. R. is not yet engaged with C***, I could wish you to think of the business, to make inquiries, and to write Mr. R. A new edition in 12mo. I believe would sell, and it could be printed cheaper

in Scotland than here; only the paper and type should be good; for our nice London eyes cannot read print upon coarse paper. But for fear of Mr. R. being burdened, I would have the risk lie with the booksellers, as interest will make them more diligent in promoting the sale.*

I shall be well pleased, if the paper which I printed † may provoke your ministers to do something handsome for Mr. R. The cause of his encumbrance is a noble one, to relieve a father, and a man whose memory, I think, should be precious to those who love the gospel in Scotland. Let not that proverb, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country," be applied to him. For setting religion aside, on the sole ground of literary abilities, I think if boasting were lawful, Scotland might boast of Mr. Riccalton no less than of Hume, Robertson, Blair, &c. He was certainly a man of a strong comprehensive mind, and if not an *elegant* he was a *mas-*

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* The first and *only* edition of Mr. Riccalton's works that has yet been printed is in 3 vols. 8vo. large print, containing Three Essays on Human Nature—Twenty-three ditto on the Doctrines of Revelation—A Treatise on the General Plan of Revelation—The Christian Life, or Four Dissertations on Gal. ii. 20.—Notes and Observations on the Epistle to the Galatians. The whole might be contained in 2 vols. 12mo.

† Account of Mr. Riccalton, sent by Mr. Newton to the Evangelical Magazine.

terly writer. His metaphysics, I think, are a good besom to sweep away the fine-spun cobweb, sceptical metaphysics, which at present are too much in fashion in both kingdoms.

I am glad you reprinted Mr. Romaine's address.* To your question: Do you approve of the invitation? I answer heartily, Yes. When you ask, Do you adopt it? I must answer, Not literally. I endeavour to mourn over my own sins, and the sins of the public, and to cry for mercy daily, and oftener than daily, both in private and in my family. Nor do I omit it in the pulpit. But after I have been engaged on the Lord's day in preaching and speaking for six hours, and nine o'clock comes, I find myself more disposed for supper and bed, than for prayer. The truth is, that I cannot confine myself much to rules, except scriptural rules. The thought, that a great number are joining with me in prayer, at the same hour and minute, is pleasing to the imagination. But the Lord hears prayer *whenever* we call upon him, without regarding our distinction of times (his own day excepted.) I therefore choose the seasons which suit best with my circumstances and convenience. Sometimes my mind is thus engaged on the public account while walking in the streets.

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* To appropriate an hour every Lord's day evening to pray for the extension of Christ's kingdom.

But really I find it not easy to know how to pray. Many think, yea many presume to say, that God does not govern the earth. He has a controversy with the nations, and especially with our nation, (which, considering our superior privileges, I deem to be the worst in Christendom) upon this account. Dare I pray, that he should give up his cause, and leave his enemies to triumph, lest I and my friends should be incommoded by the methods he may see fit to take, to make them know that *he is the Lord?* I dare not. Personal losses and crosses are sometimes sanctified to the saving of the soul. If that person is my friend, I ought to be rather thankful than sorry for those trials which have this effect. It may be so with a nation. If the French were permitted to land, and to spread ravages, fire, and sword, through half the kingdom, provided such calamities were the means of stirring up multitudes who now live careless in sin to seek the Lord in good earnest, and with their whole heart, such a season of distress might be the happiest time that Britain ever saw. For surely, that must be the best time when the best cause flourishes most. We are apt to be too selfish, too little concerned for the glory of God and the good of souls. Let us pray that the gospel may spread, that the Lord may revive his work in the midst of the years, whatever may become of our fig-tress and vines! And it becomes us submissively to leave the me-

thods of accomplishing his great designs to his wisdom.

Happen what will, it shall be well with them that fear the Lord. He invites them to hide themselves in his secret chambers, and promises to keep them under the shadow of his wings. He can protect them when many fall around them, or if he permits them to suffer with others, he *can*, he *will*, give them strength according to their day, and make all things work together for their good. So that either way they are safe. The time is short; his people will soon be at the end of their journey, and then they will not be much concerned for what they met with upon the road. I pray with submission, for peace at home and abroad. But when I look upon the state of things around me, I rather pray from a conviction of duty, than in faith, that it will be so. But the Lord's thoughts are higher than mine, as the heavens are above the earth. Who knows but he may yet turn from his fierce anger? The light and power of the gospel are certainly upon the increase in *England*. This is the only good sign of the times I can discern.

Miss C*** adds her best wishes to mine for your peace and comfort.

I am sincerely yours,

J. N.

LETTER XXIV.

London, July 18, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

IN future, if you please, you may direct to me, as formerly, under cover to ****, M. P. I thank you for the only news I have had of my sister since she left Yorkshire. I hope she still has the use of her right hand, and will soon give me a proof of it. I love her dearly, and shall be glad to hear from her or my brother.

Lord and Lady **** returned some weeks since to ****. I have inquired, but can find no friend who has any acquaintance with Lord ****'s family. But if the Lord has engaged the hearts of the young ladies you speak of, he will provide all that is necessary to bring them forward in his own good time. His work is perfect. All hearts and means are in his hands, and where he begins he will surely make an end.

I know, comparatively, but few of my hearers. It is probable I had no knowledge of the gentleman you mention who died lately; but I hope I shall know him hereafter. Nor can I well tell to what parish the Minories, or the back of the Minories, belongs. But I am glad if there is a minister in it who speaks of seeking the Lord; for the phrase is rather unfashionable in these parts; few, excepting those called the Methodist clergy, make use of it.

I like to keep you in my debt, though not having any long letter from you to answer, I am at a loss for a particular subject. But a general subject is always at hand, were my heart always in tune to manage it. Should not a believer be ashamed to own that he can find nothing to say, or write about? Perhaps not. For if he is indeed poor, and unable of himself to think a good thought, why should he be ashamed to confess his weakness and poverty? I may well be ashamed of my depravity, that I am such a helpless, worthless creature; but if it be so, to deny or attempt to palliate the case, would expose me to farther shame for my pride and hypocrisy. I sometimes compare myself to a mill, which differs from a common house, in having a mechanical apparatus, capable of producing motion, but without wind or water, the wheels are all useless, and the mill can neither grind nor move. Thus my knowledge of divine things, such as it is, is often dormant; and though I do not forget what I read of the person and love of the Saviour, of the beauty of holiness, and the joys of heaven, I cannot speak and write of them just *when* I please, or *as* I please; but only as I am assisted by an influence, which is no more at my command than the rain or the sunshine. When a large heavy-laden ship is dry upon the shore, a thousand teams of horses could not stir her an inch: but when the tide returns

and raises her from the ground, one man with a rope can move her. Thus it is with me; what is impracticable at one time is easy at another. I am a dependent creature. When the Lord is with me, I can do something; if he withdraws I can do nothing. Yet I am no better in myself when I can do most, nor, strictly speaking, am I worse when I can do least. For it is at all times equally true, that I have nothing properly my own. The eye can see if it has light: but it has no light in itself. The seeing and the blind are much upon a par in the dark; only the man who can see is qualified to perceive and welcome the light when it returns.

Could I always depend upon this divine influence, in a steadfast use of the means by which he has promised to communicate it, without any mixture of self-dependence, I believe I should go on better: but my rashness renders many mortifying lessons, in the school of experience, quite necessary. When shall I learn to be like a little child, who, sensible of his weakness, is afraid to cross the street without leading, and while he is led has no fear at all; and who, not pretending to be wise, believes with implicit confidence what he is told by his affectionate parents!

I shall be glad to see Dr. Erskine's Address. We may pray *in faith* for the spread of the gospel, and the enlargement of our Lord's kingdom; for we may be sure this is the great design he

has in view, and for which the wheels of time and nature are kept in motion. This is the grand mark, to which the rise and fall of empires, and the commotions of the present day, have a direct tendency, though the way of the Lord is so in the sea, that we short-sighted creatures cannot trace the connexion of events, and the dependence of one upon another. But his word warrants us to believe what we cannot clearly see. They say the times are very dark: they seem so to us; clouds and darkness are about his throne, but light will in due time shine out. He is carrying on his work by a straight line. If you or I were engaged in a plan which we had much at heart, we would not suffer any thing to hinder our purpose, if we could prevent it: much less will he, who has all power in heaven and on earth. Even the wrath of his enemies shall praise him: they are permitted to do nothing but what shall be found subservient to his design. Not only was Cyrus his servant, but Pharaoh and Senacherib likewise: they sought their own will and glory, but promoted his.

We may leave all in his hands safely: yet there is a part for us to act. We ought to be affected by what we see and hear—to mourn for our own sins, and for the sins of others, and for the miseries with which sin has filled the world. We should be jealous for the Lord of hosts, and

compassionate to the souls of men. Now his hand is so visibly and awfully lifted up, it becomes us to see it, acknowledge it, and humble ourselves under it, whether others will or not. The Lord has a controversy with this nation, he is pleading his own cause against the prevailing spirit of infidelity, and the abominations that abound, and he will make sinful worms know that he is the Lord, and that in all they speak proudly, he is *above them*. Perhaps the steps he sees fit to take, may touch his own people in their temporal concerns, but his glory ought to be the dearest objects of their souls. It is better we should suffer a little, and for a little while, than that his enemies should triumph. The love of self and of the present world, make us terribly afraid when any thing seems to threaten our ease and prosperity: but what are these when compared with the glory of our Lord and the welfare of precious souls. The times are dark; but perhaps they were darker in *England* sixty years ago, when, though we had peace and plenty, the bulk of the kingdom lay under the judgment of an unregenerate ministry, and the people were perishing for lack of knowledge. In this respect, the times are better than they were. The gospel is preached in many parts; we have it plentifully in London; and many of our great towns, which were once sitting in darkness, have now the true light. Some of those places were as a wilder-

ness in my remembrance, and now they are as gardens of the Lord. And every year the gospel is planted in new places—ministers are still raising up—the work is still spreading. I am not sure that in the year 1740, there was a single parochial minister, who was publicly known as a gospel preacher, in the whole kingdom: now we have, I know not how many, but I think not fewer than four hundred. Let us, my friend, settle it as a maxim, that it is the *best time* with any nation when the *best cause* flourishes most: for as the life is more than meat, so the soul is more than the body. If one half of the kingdom was ravaged by war, provided the distress was sanctified to stir up many careless ones to seek the Lord and his salvation—such a dispensation would be more a mercy than a judgment.

It is Saturday evening, when I usually have a few select friends, chiefly ministers, to drink tea with me. Something that passes at these meetings often suggests subject matter for the Lord's day. My company is gone, and I have a little time left to finish my letter.

I believe the Lord's old and faithful servant, Mr. Romaine, is going home. He is nearly 82 years of age; has been 58 years in the ministry; and was never laid by a single sabbath till very lately. I have known him as a preacher of the gospel since about the year 1750, and I believe he began sooner. He has been an ho-

nourable and useful man, a burning and a shining light—inflexible as an iron pillar in publishing the truth, and unmoved either by the smiles or the frowns of the world. He is the most popular man we have had since Mr. Whitfield; and few now living will be more missed. I believe some of his friends would wish to keep him here another fourscore years if they could: but when he goes, as he could not be expected to preach if he lived, I shall not be sorry that he has entered into his Master's joy. My turn will probably be next, for I shall be seventy the 4th August. Pray for me, that I may be found ready when the summons shall come. I will try to pray for you, that the Lord may bless you more and more, and make you a blessing in all your connexions.

I am

Your affectionate friend,

OMICRON.

LETTER XXV.

LONDON, September 2, 1795

DEAR SIR,

IT runs in my head that I have two of your letters unanswered, but I can find only one; nor can I recollect the particulars of the other, if there be another. That before me is dated the 17th August.

It is good to desire to be useful; but it is not necessary to know how much we are so. If you walk humbly and uprightly before the Lord, I may venture to answer for your usefulness: but we often mean by the word, to be instrumental in doing great things. Self likes to do great things; but grace teaches us to do little things with a great spirit—that is, for the Lord's sake. To fill up his appointed post with integrity, submission, and thankfulness, is all that an angel could do, if he was upon earth.

I thank you for the extract from Dr. Gillies's letter. I hope, as you say, it does suit me, and I pray that it *may* suit me, if it should be the Lord's pleasure to lay *me* aside. I may expect it daily at my time of life; though at present I am lusty and strong: but a few minutes is sufficient to produce a great change. But I wish to work while it is day, and to leave to-morrow in his hands.

Dr. E*** bears fruit in old age. I never exchanged a line with him; but I have long had a high respect for his character. I hope to know him hereafter. I once breakfasted and once dined with Lord H***. He seemed a very amiable gentleman. May the Lord give him the best honours and the best riches, and strengthen his chaplain abundantly.

I smile at your not knowing the meaning of Easter. Those who observe it, profess to ob-

serve it in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection. As this took place the third day after the passover, and the passover was regulated by the full moon, the third day, or Easter, most frequently happened on a week-day. Some great Doctors thought it most proper to observe it on the Lord's-day next following the passover—others, perhaps as great Doctors as the former, thought it best to abide by the numerical third day. I cannot tell you how many councils and convocations were held to settle this knotty point: but as Pope Self presided in them all, and held both sides of the question, the disputes ended in a total and final separation between the eastern and western, that is, the Greek and Roman churches. And venerable Bede long afterwards, writing in praise of a cotemporary, thought himself bound in conscience to close the account with this censure, "But poor mistaken man, *he did not keep Easter in our way;*" and this spoiled his otherwise good character. I consider many of the modern disputes of the like importance.

Your account of **** should animate us to bear a faithful and affectionate testimony to the truth, upon all proper occasions, and not be discouraged by apparent difficulties. The heart is like gunpowder, which lies quiet if fire be kept from it; but a single spark, in the Lord's time, is sufficient to set it in a blaze.

Mr. Romaine lived honourably and usefully, and died comfortably. The same may be said of many who live and die unknown and unnoticed by men. A poor old man or woman in a parish work-house, if faithful in their profession, and submissive to their lot, who rejoice to hear of the great minister's success, and pray for him, may be equally great in the sight of the Lord, who seeth not as man seeth, and accepteth, not according to what his people actually do for him, but according to what they would do, if they could. I suppose, when Lazarus died, no train of coaches attended his funeral, he had probably no funeral oration, no sumptuous monument; but he had an attendant guard of angels, and is represented to our conceptions as obtaining a chief seat in the kingdom, even in the bosom of Abraham; (see Luke xvi. 22.) And what is said of him, Luke xvi. will embalm and honour his memory to all succeeding generations.

Farewell. My time is expired, and my paper nearly full. May the Lord bless you and all his people in Edinburgh, in North Britain, and between the North and South Poles. Amen.

I am

Your truly affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XXVI.

LONDON, September 8, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR friend, Mr. E***, breakfasted with me this morning. As he brought a testimonial from you, I told him I should be glad to see him again and again while he staid. I thank you for your two letters by him. I wrote to you last week, and therefore shall not undertake to pay my new debts as yet. By the taste I had of Mr. E***, I like him well. Mr. J***, the Anti-burgher minister, brought him to me, with a Mr. M***, who, I suppose, is a brother of his own denomination. If they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, I care not what they are called.

It is now my turn to recommend, and I do it with great pleasure. This is to introduce my respected friend M*** to your acquaintance and good offices. He was governor of Sierra Leone, when the French visited them, and heroically destroyed all their pigs and poultry with fire-arms, and without resistance. Mr. M*** will be a welcome visitant to you, for he will bring you good news from a far country. The fields there are ripe for harvest, and he will be glad of your assistance to procure more labourers to go with him into the black vineyard.

Mr. B***'s papers are with the bishop; and I expect he will be ordained the 20th instant. He will then commence my curate. I have waited for him four years, which is longer than I expect to keep him, if I should live so long myself. He is, &c. * * * * *, and from the Lord's wonderful leadings of him, I apprehend he has designed him for important services. I hope I shall be willing to part with him at the Lord's call; but should he be permitted to supply my lack of service, for I may expect soon to be laid aside, if I am not taken away, I shall have cause to be thankful, as he is one in whom I may fully depend.

Perhaps I shall have time to add no more, when I have repeated my wishes for your welfare in every sense, in which Miss C*** joins—and assured you once more, that I am,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend,

8 P. M. J. N.

LETTER XXVII.

LONDON, Oct. 8, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

I HOPE you have seen Mr. Goode's Funeral Sermon on Mr. Romaine, at Edinburgh. There is a striking quotation in it from the late Lord Chesterfield. The Lord sometimes permits emi-

nent preachers, like R. Erskine, to be in the dark for a season, towards the close of life, to teach us that he does not accept them for their gifts or services, but merely for that faith in Jesus, in which they are often equalled, often exceeded, by the poorest and most obscure people of his flock.

E——e, G——b, and Co. the old seceders, were like unripe fruit, good in its kind, but harsh and sour. Succeeding summers and winters have mellowed those that are now upon the tree; and such as come in my way have generally a good flavour. We know what human nature is, and the power of prejudice and self-will, or we might wonder that any who love and preach the gospel of peace, should be bitter in their spirit.

I am glad that Mr. Black grows and thrives in his new situation. Transplanting a useful minister is like moving a large tree, which will not always take deep root in another spot. But sometimes it is the Lord's doing, and then it prospers of course. Give my love to him, with thanks for his letter, which I hope to answer if I am spared.

I have no further concern in the M—y S—y than to pray that the Lord may bless and succeed the design. This I do both in public and in private, daily. I had my reasons for not taking an active part in it. Nor was my presence needful. They have many to plan, and much money. The design is undoubtedly commendable, and

when I think of the uncommon concurrence it has met with throughout the kingdom, I cannot but hope that much good will come of it: but I think they are too sanguine in the outset. For myself, I am already engaged to support and recommend the Moravian missions; there I seem to know what I am about—there I see the hand of the Lord already stretched out. I know their missionaries are eminently endued with a spirit of disinterestedness, self-denial, humility, fortitude, and the meekness of wisdom; and the success the Lord has given them is truly wonderful. Perhaps there has been nothing equal to what they have suffered, and what they have done among the heathens, since the apostle's days. But it may be said of our Saviour's kingdom, so far as the Brethren or Moravians are concerned in it, that it *cometh not with observation.* It makes no noise—it attracts but little attention. They are a people little known, and therefore despised and undervalued by many, but not by me. I judge that true christian discipline is better observed by them, than by any other body of people that profess the gospel.

October 15. My letter has already been a week in hand. It seems from your MS. that your correspondence with me was maintained through the whole of your low uncomfortable state; yet I do not recollect any remarkable hints of your despondency; on the contrary, you still

supplied me with anecdotes. However, I praise the Lord for your deliverance, and that the account you give of it is so scriptural and solid. The sting of death is now taken away, and I hope the stroke of death is yet at a distance from you; and that you will live to be an ornament, and an instrument for good, to the cause you profess. Though not a minister, you may be able to apply the apostle's words to yourself, 2 Cor. i. 3—6. It is this thought makes me try to be thankful that my life is prolonged; though I see little else worth living for in such a world as this: and yet no one has less reason to be weary of living, for I abound with comforts, and hardly meet with any thing deserving the name of a trial. To depart, and be with Jesus, is certainly far better; but upon that very account it is well worth waiting for.

I thank you for the printed papers. I can feel for Mr. E***. But he is a young man. I hope the Lord will heal his wound, and perhaps in due time the breach may be comfortably repaired. Had they lived so long together as my dear wife and I did, and in harmony, as I believe they would; the separating stroke would have been no less keen after forty years than in the first. And then it is probable, that he, if the survivor, must have lived a solitary like me, for the rest of his days. The Lord's dispensations are various to different persons, but they are all right.

I think I may now take my leave of you. I have some thoughts of attempting to write some account of my friend, the late Mr. Grimshaw. What was said of him in ***** was very poor and imperfect. If I undertake this job, it will make me very tardy in my correspondence. He was, in some respects, the most extraordinary man I have known. I shall enclose you a letter to my brother: the Lord bless you in all things.

I am affectionately yours,

J. N.

Oct. 16.

LETTER XXVIII.

London, December 12, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

DR. P*** called one evening, a time when I never ask any body to stay, for I need the evening much, to wind up the affairs of the day. But I invited him plentifully to come again. The book he brought was published last year in London, from a translation made in Holland. I have not yet compared it with yours, but I shall probably like yours best, as I judge from some passages in mine, the translator was a Dutchman.

I cannot now proceed to your other letter, for as I wish you to have my anniversary verses for this year, I am afraid of overloading the frank if I filled the sheet; and for this reason I only send

you one copy, with one for my sister; but that one is entirely at your service, to do with it what you please.

I believe the lines you quote from Dr. Watts were not spoken extempore; at least, they are in one of his lyric poems. However, your observation, that we are apt to judge of a man's size by the opinion we form of him, is generally true. I might perhaps think you half a head taller than you are, if I had never seen you. It is said that Dr. Watts in the early part of his life, had a *penchant* for the late Mrs. Rowe, and the lady, while she only judged of him by his writings, was not averse to the thought. At last, they had an interview; from that time she always regarded him as a friend, but no farther.

I am sincerely yours,

J. N.

LETTER XXIX.

LONDON, February 10, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I am obliged to write short letters, I wish to keep the road of correspondence open between us.

* * * * * * *

Your story of the poor widow and rich American, is a good one. Many such appearances of the Lord, in answer to the cries of his poor, are

afforded, I doubt not, every day; and they will all be known, to his praise, hereafter. I think his children, when they meet in glory, will have much to tell each other of what he did for them in the wilderness.

We still jog on, much as usual, at No. 6, and at St. Mary's. Heart peace, house peace, and church peace, are great blessings. I am favoured with them all. It is true there is an inward warfare; but there is *peace* at the bottom. It might make a coward bold, to be assured of victory while upon the field of battle.

May we hold fast the shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit, and fix our eyes upon the Captain of our salvation, who holds out the prize in our view, and says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life."

I am

Your affectionate,

OMICRON.

LETTER XXX.

London, April 9, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

WHAT you say of **** with respect to Mr. Whitfield and Dr. ****, is very remarkable; but such things have been known. A very poor old man in Olney had a son who behaved very

ill, run away, and went to India in a man of war. Some years after, a man came to Olney to tell him that his son was dead. Are you sure of it? Yes, very sure. I was his ship-mate, and, in an engagement with the French, he was killed by a cannon ball. I stood near him, and saw him killed. The old man did not retire and pray. He only paused a little, and then said, "Well, I shall see my boy here again for all that." So it proved. He came home safe and sound. The Lord called him by his grace, and he was one of my people for many years.

It is pleasing, as you observe, to see the partition walls of bigotry tottering. It is remarkably so in Scotland. The Seceders, who were accounted the most rigid, were the people who first introduced my name there, and reprinted three volumes by J. N. at their own risk, when the booksellers, having no knowledge of me, would not venture. There seems of late a closer coalition among the *sound* dissenters in England. I desire, and by his grace I resolve to love all who love him.

I could tattle on, but time fails, and I must enclose a line for Brother Black.

May the Lord's peace and presence be with you and with Your affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XXXI.

London, July 5, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

IT is probable that neither Mr. nor Mrs. B*** will tell you how highly we have been gratified by so much of their company as they could favour us with, and therefore I mention it myself. We should have been pleased to have had them with us every day, and from morning till night, if possible. You send me good remittances from Scotland.

Mr. E*** has written to me himself—please to present my love to him. I do not expect leisure to write an Essay for many months to come. I have thoughts of a journey to Southampton soon, and when I return I must, if possible, resume the Life of Mr. Grimshaw, of which I have written little more than a sheet, though I made a beginning in February. But if I live another month, I shall enter my 72d year, so that no dependence should be placed on me. I may expect to be laid aside, or called home, from day to day.

Mr. B***, my curate, suited me and my people exactly; but I am well satisfied that his path of duty leads to B***, and therefore I part with him without reluctance. What are my private feelings or convenience when put in competition

with what I really believe to be the call and will of the Lord! However, I expect another curate in a few days, a particular friend, whom I know to be gracious, humble, and able.

Some have wondered, of late, how I could stay with comfort in my present situation: I hope their wonder is over before now. But I will tell you, in the first place, that nothing is imposed upon me, as a clergyman, that at all hurts my conscience. Then farther, I find liberty in the service, my church is full and crowded, my auditory is peaceful and attentive, there are many eminent christians among them, a general seriousness is upon the face of the congregation; some, and as times go, many are successfully awakened, and we have particularly a fine shew of young people springing up, and increasing in numbers and graces, like willows by the watercourses. In a word, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the hungry are fed, the burdened are set at liberty. With these tokens of the Lord's presence amongst us, and his goodness afforded in my private walk and public work, I am well satisfied that I am where he would have me to be. If he accepts us, and visits us, it is a small matter if some of our brethren are displeased. If he is pleased to smile upon us, we can bear their censures. And besides, if I was to leave this church, to whom must I go? The Presbyterians, Inde-

pendents, Baptists, Seceders, &c. all say with equal positiveness, "*we are the people.*" But I cannot join with them all. By the grace of God, I will love them and pray for them all; but I will join with none of them. I will stay where I am. And if I were to choose again, I would make the same choice to-morrow. I never did, I trust I never shall repent it. My reasons assigned in the *Apologia* are more and more confirmed to me, the longer I live.

My time and paper are finished. Farewell for the present. May the Lord be with you and bless you in all things. Phil. iii. 15, 16.

I am sincerely, dear Sir,

Your affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XXXII.

London, October 7, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

SIX weeks absence has thrown my home affairs sadly behind hand: but I hope the time was not wholly lost. We, that is dear Miss C*** and myself, left London the 19th August, and returned the 1st instant. We spent the first week at Reading, where the Lord has many people, warm-hearted, upright, and loving. The rest of our time we were at Mr. T***'s, at Portswood Green, from whence I have written to you

formerly. He lives within two miles of S****, where there are five churches, but no pulpit open for me. But Mr. T*** opened his house, and made room for about 300 hearers. I preached three evenings in the week, while I staid—we were often full—my hearers were chiefly from the neighbouring villages, and seem willing to hear the gospel, if they had any body to preach it to them. But, alas! in those parts, and in many parts of the kingdom, comparatively a land of light,

"The hungry sheep look up, but are not fed."

We need not go far from home to find people no less ignorant of spiritual things, no less unconcerned about their souls, than the heathens in Africa or Otaheite. We are encouraged, yea we are commanded to pray, that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more faithful labourers, for as yet they are but few, compared with the extensive wilds at home and abroad.

I have received a letter from B***, dated, I think, the 27th August. They were then all well, off the Canary Islands, entering upon the trade winds, and by this time may be at the Cape of Good Hope. I saw his call clear, and gave him up without reluctance, though he was to me as a right hand. I then engaged a J—— B——r to be my curate. He was my intimate friend. I had been chiefly instrumental in bringing him

forward. He was ordained about two years ago. He was able and ready as a preacher, humble, spiritual, and devoted as a christian, beyond the common standard at his years. I was ready to call him *Seth*, and thought the Lord had given him to me in the room of B——n. But a few days before I left London, he was suddenly taken with a bleeding of his lungs, which terminated his life below in about a fortnight. He was bereaved of an excellent wife last summer. Of four children, one only was left, a sweet little boy of about four years old. This child was taken with the small-pox while his father was ill, he could not see the child, but lived to hear of his death. He and I had promised ourselves much pleasure in our connexion; but we are short-sighted creatures. Thus all his earthly expectations were crossed; but his last words were, "*The Lord has done all things well*," and from them I preached his funeral sermon last Sabbath evening. I thank the Lord I can say and believe he does all things well; but I have had my feelings: for I hoped I had found a person on whom I might fully depend, and whom my people would hear with pleasure in case I should be laid aside. Perhaps I am to live and preach a little longer. If it be so, *well*, if otherwise, *well*, he does all things well; and when he sees I really need assistance, he can provide it. My part is to live to-day, and to leave to-morrow with him.

I perhaps may write a paper for the work you mention, but I know not when, I am so overwhelmed with correspondence. Though I wrote more than forty letters while abroad, I have nearly as many by me that should be answered, if I could find time, and almost every post adds to their number. Many are from strangers, which must be noticed of course when I cannot write to my friends. Then I have so many visitants, that I can seldom call an hour my own, when I am at home; and if I could attend to the sick and the sorrowful as I wish, I should be always abroad. I wish likewise to return to the Life of Mr. Grimshaw, which has lain by untouched for six months past. So that I am indeed full-handed.

I am glad to hear well *of* Mrs. H***, and hope I should have heard *from* her. I had no fear of her not being supported. How can they fall who lean upon the Lord, and have an almighty arm underneath them? Give our warm love to her, to Mr. and Mrs. B***, &c. If you printed the second anniversary, "*When grace her balm to sooth my pain*," and have any left that you can spare, I shall be obliged to you for a few copies. We have none here in print but what are bound up with Letters to a Wife.

I am now getting into my old track, which seems to suit me better than rambling about. I have cause to be thankful, that *abroad*, while I was

abroad, was very pleasant, but still *home is home*, I love my friends at a distance, but it is not practicable to travel to them all; and therefore I am glad when they call upon me in London, as many of them do in the course of the year; and I seldom stir out for two or three days but I miss some whom I should have seen, if I had remained upon the spot. There was a time when I did not know that I had a friend in the world, excepting my dear Mary's family; but the Lord has given me so many since, that I cannot express a proper regard to them all. Jacob's acknowledgment, with a little variation, become me—"With my staff I came over Jordan, and now I am become two bands!" What a wretch was I in Africa! A servant of slaves, scorned and yet sometimes pitied, by the lowest of the human race! And how is it with me now? O Lord, I am a wonder to many, and to myself!

My eventful life is drawing to a close. While I walked in the way of transgressors, I found it hard indeed! Since the Lord took me up, *outcast* as I was, and brought me into his fold, my path has been as remarkably smooth. So far as happiness can be found in externals, I have known it: yet I cannot wish to live my most pleasant days over again. Sin and vanity are entwined with them all. I am still as happy as temporals in my widowed state can make me. But I am not sorry that I am in my 72d year. I have lived

long enough to know what the world *can* do, and what it *cannot* do. I have no business in it, but to fill up the uncertain remnant, as becomes a believer and a minister of the gospel. If the Lord by his grace enables me for this, I care not whether my stay here be longer or shorter; only may I be found ready when the summons shall come. Pray for me, and I will try to pray for you. May the gracious Saviour dwell with you, and with me, and with all who love him, as the Lord, the guardian, and beloved of our hearts. Amen. Believe me to be

Your sincerely affectionate friend,

J. N.

LETTER XXXIII.

London, November 23, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING a long letter ready to send to Mr. B*** when yours of the 14th arrived, I delayed it till I could find time to put a short one under the same cover for you, to thank you for it. I believe it must be shortish at present.

Mr. H***'s design is a noble one; may the Lord prosper it! I do not think that a *useless life* at home, is a necessary or proper qualification for serving a missionary abroad: but there are extremes on both sides: and I should be sorry if all who love the Lord, and whom he has placed

in a line of service here, should think it their duty to leave their posts, and turn missionaries. Especially I hope that you will not take such a thought into your own head, as some of your friends have entertained in theirs for you. If it should enter your pericranium, I hope you will have many friends to give you lectures upon moderation, prudence, &c. and that the Lord will give you the hearing ear, and make you content and willing to stay at home. I have no doubt but Satan would be glad to see you shipped off to India, or any where, so he might get rid of you, for you stand in his way where you are.

I thank you beforehand for the Anniversaries, No. 2. I believe I shall write no more. No. 5 speaks of the wound as healed; why then should I open it again; I thank the Lord it is healed, so far as concerns the peace of my mind. I am quite satisfied. But my recollection of circumstances is nearly as fresh as in the first month. Still she is seldom out of my waking thoughts; but this does not give me uneasiness. But you are a bachelor.

Let us continue to exchange mutual prayers. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. We shall not always live this dying life. We hope to see him as he is. When all will be well for ever! I hope my next to Edinburgh will be to Mr. Black. I thank him for sending Mr. B*** to me. He is a good remittance. I cannot

make payments in this way, equal to what I receive. The Lord be with you, and with

Your affectionate friend,

J. N.

LETTER XXXIV.

London, April 5, 1797.

DEAR SIR,

I THOUGHT your last letter rather long in coming, but when it came I was made amends. I rejoiced greatly that the judgment of Mr. B*** and your other friends coincided with my own, because it helped to turn the scale. I ought to be dubious of my own judgment, and I hope I am not a dogmatist: but your case was so plain, that I am morally certain that I judged right; and I have little doubt, but that if you live, you will see more reason than perhaps you do at present, to thank the Lord for inclining you to follow our advice.

I am glad you have at last seen a Moravian brother. They are in general so much alike, that one may be taken as a specimen of many. They have a few peculiarities resulting from their church constitution; but, as a body, I consider them as the most exemplary, peaceful, and spiritual society of all that bear the christian name. Their grand object, and in which their excellence is most signally displayed, is the conversion of the

heathen. In this branch, without noise or notice, they have done more in promoting the knowledge of the true gospel, in about fifty years, than has been done by all Christendom in fifteen hundred years before them. God has given them the true missionary spirit, and I think, excepting Mr. Brainerd, and two or three more in North America, they have hitherto had a monopoly of it, though Mr. C***, the Baptist missionary in Bengal, is, I hope, treading in their steps. Their patience, fortitude, self-denial, perseverance, courage, holy wisdom, and their success, would be astonishing, did we not know whose they are and whom they serve. If you have not read Crantz's history of the Greenland mission, which has been long in print, or the history of the mission in North America, published about two or three years ago, I wish you had them.

I am glad that a spirit of prayer is excited in your parts, on a national account. I wish it was more so with us.

I hope indeed we have many (though *comparatively* few) whose eyes affect their hearts, and are mourning in secret for the evils which they cannot prevent. These I account as the chariots and horsemen of our Israel. I should have little hope from our fleets and armies, farther than the Lord may be pleased to give them success, in answer to the prayers of his people. Who knows but for their sakes he may yet avert or suspend

deserved judgments, at least so far as not to give us up as a prey to the merciless teeth of our enemies. But however he may deal with others, he will favour them with his *mark* of protection and support. Verily it shall be well with the righteous. He will shew himself strong in behalf of them that fear him: and if he permits them to suffer outwardly like others, his promise of strength according to their day, will carry them unhurt through fire and water.

I have just touched upon the several points in yours. I have not leisure to write more largely. I enclose a letter to Mr. B***. I commend you to the guidance and blessing of the Lord. Pray for us. I am

Your very affectionate,
J. N.

LETTER XXXV.

SOUTHAMPTON, July 24, 1797.

MR DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter would have been answered sooner if I had remained at home: but new places and faces have engaged me of late. I left London the 4th instant (soon after I received it,) passed a fortnight at *Reading*, with Mr. Cadogan's widowed people, and came hither the 21st.

I hope the spirit for missions, which has of late been so generally awakened, will, in due time,

by the Lord's blessing, be productive of much good. The first and present good effect of it seems to be the concern excited for the multitudes in our own land, who are perishing for lack of knowledge. The evangelical dissenters amongst us are taking this matter into serious consideration, and are sending forth missionaries into all quarters. And though I am of the Establishment, and their zeal is not likely to aggrandize mother church; if they employ fit instruments, and the Lord is pleased to own their labours, I must and will rejoice; for I dare not wish the sheep should be starved, because their own reputed and official pastors, cannot, or will not, feed them.

I know not how you draw the line in your country, between preaching and exhorting. If I speak when the door is open to all comers, I call it preaching; but if I speak in a friend's house to the family, or to a few more who come only by invitation or permission, I do not preach; for to *preach* is to speak *publicly*. A preacher is Κηρυξ, a herald; and thus the reading of the scriptures is called *preaching*, Acts xv. 21. The speaking upon a text, or without one, makes no difference: at least, I think not. It is possible to preach a very good sermon from an English or Scotch proverb. Modes and fashions alter in religious matters, as well as in dress. Our first reformers usually preached from *common places;*

they did not take a text, but discussed a subject—such as faith, repentance, holiness, &c. yet surely they were preachers of the gospel. The two volumes of Homilies, to which our clergy are obliged by law to subscribe their assent, are a valuable collection of sermons in this way.

I am no advocate for self-sent preachers at large. It seems a maxim in the present day, that if any man *thinks himself* qualified to preach, he is fully authorized to go forth and try. Some of these have done good; but I believe many of them have done mischief, diffused errors, multiplied contentions and division, and caused the ways of truth to be evil spoken of. But when men whose characters and abilities are approved by competent judges, whose motives are known to be pure, and whose labours are excited by the exigency of the occasion, lay themselves out to instruct the ignorant and rouse the careless, I think they deserve thanks and encouragement rather than reprehension, if they step a little over the bounds of church order. I know that many on your side of the Tweed deem Presbyterian order as *de jure divino*—a tabernacle made exactly according to the pattern on the mount, and that it would be criminal either to add, or to take away a single loop or pin. On our side of the river, many think as highly of Episcopal, or of Congregational order. Perhaps much of our differences of opinion on this head, may be as-

cribed to the air we breathed, and the milk which we drank in our infancy. If I had lived in Scotland, and known the Lord, my ministry, I suppose, would have been in the Kirk, or the Relief, or the Secession; and if Dr. Erskine had been born and bred among us, and regarded according to his merit, he might perhaps have been Archbishop of Canterbury long ago.

Thus I have given you my free sentiments on your *knotty point.* I would not willingly offend any person. I claim the privilege of thinking for myself, and I am well content that others should enjoy the same. I hope I love all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. If they agree with me in this point, I would not waste half an hour in attempting to convert them to my opinion in smaller matters. I leave others to dispute whether the husk or the shell of the nut be the better of the two; I hope to be content with the kernel.

What is become of Colonel Blackador's Letters? I hope you have not given up your purpose of making a selection.

My paper is nearly full. If it please the Lord that nothing unforeseen should call me home sooner, we shall stay here till about the middle of September. A letter from you will find me if enclosed to ***** P. M. As this conveyance is always open, you never need wait for a frank. I believe your last was near three weeks old be-

fore I received it. When they come *via* Mr.*** I have them the day, and almost the hour, when the mail brings them.

Give my respects to * * *, &c. Please to tell the two latter that my heart and prayers are with them. May the Lord bless them in their own souls, and make them a blessing to many. Give my love likewise to my brother and sister when they come in your way. She knows that I wrote last, and I can seldom afford to send two letters for one.

The Lord be with you, dear Sir. Continue to pray for Your affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XXXVI.

London, October 14, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WISH well to your Philanthropic Society or Penitentiary: but we cannot imitate you. Our prisons are supplied with chaplains, and I do not know that any of our magistrates are disposed to assist, or even countenance Methodistical plans. But *we* likewise have a Philanthropic Society, for the education of the children of convicts and vagrants, which I hope is pretty well conducted, and the children attend a church where the gospel is preached at least one part of the day.

I believe I answered your first letter I received at Southampton. I am now to thank you for your second, dated 8th September, which, as you intended, gave great pleasure not only to me, but to my friends there. Give my love to Messrs. H*** and A***, and tell them that I rejoice in their zeal, their acceptance, and in their success. Why should not the Orkneys, and the Highland Islands, deserve attention as much as the islands in the South Sea? I hope gospel zeal will, in due time, sail northwards to Shetland, and westward to St. Kilda, and all the intermediate islands. You have already a society established for the Highlands, may the Lord put all their wheels in motion!

The gospel ministers in our Establishment are mostly confined to their parishes, and cannot do much abroad; but the Congregational Dissenters are stirring in most parts of our kingdom, and associating with a design to spread the good news amongst the villages in their respective neighbourhoods, which are wofully neglected in many places. Indeed we cannot expect those who have no concern for their own souls, should be careful for the souls of their parishioners. I fear but few of them, comparatively, have either the *will* or the *skill*, which the shepherd's office requires; and therefore, though I am a mighty good churchman, I must bid God speed to the labours of all who preach the truth in love, whether in

meetings or barns, in the highways or the fields. It is better people should be Dissenters or Methodists than heathens.

May your schools prosper! The Lord make you like the tree in Psalm i. I congratulate you and myself on the progress of what some may call latitudinarianism in Scotland. May we not say with the apostle, "Grace be with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" I think that is a latitudinarian prayer—I hope many agree in loving him, who sadly disagree about trifles. Such is the weakness and wickedness of the heart, even in good men. There is a great and old established house, which does much business, and causes no small disturbance in the world and in the church. The *firm* is SATAN, SELF, AND Co. Till this powerful, extensive partnership be dissolved, we cannot expect perfect peace and union among all believers. It will be a joyful day, when its credit shall totally fail. Such a day we are warranted to hope for.

Infidelity spreads, and I trust the gospel spreads likewise. Perhaps the time is coming, when all sects and parties shall be reduced to two, christians and infidels. So it was at the first promulgation of the gospel. For what I know, before long, the infidel spirit may be so prevalent, that no man without real grace will dare to avow so much as a professional attachment to the name of Jesus: then formal professors will drop off

like leaves from the trees in October. The Lord's fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and burn up the chaff; but he knows them that are his, and how to take care of them. He that endureth unto the end shall be saved!

Navigation would be more dangerous than it is, if the storm gave no warning of its approach: but the skilful mariner has his eye upon the clouds, and when he sees them gathering thick and black, he takes in his sails, and prepares, as much as he can, to meet what he expects. If he should neglect this, and play or sleep, his vessel might be overset. May we walk circumspectly, considering the times, because the days are evil!

Your two missionaries called upon me, and promised to come to breakfast, if they could; but I saw them no more. I invited two others sent from Glasgow, who spoke to me at church on Sabbath evening; but I suppose they had no time. They were all set apart at Mr. Hill's chapel on Monday, and from what I hear may be by this time at Portsmouth. May a blessing go with them! I am glad to find by your memorial, that you are better informed of the Moravians than you seemed to be when I first mentioned them to you. They say money is the sinews of war; if it was likewise the sinews of missions, we might do well. But, O that the

Lord may drop the mantle of the Moravian missionaries amongst us.

We returned from Southampton in peace and safety the 14th September, after ten weeks' absence, and found all well at home and at St. Mary's. I have a nice curate, Mr. Gunn; I know not whether his report is heard in Scotland. I have reason to hope that the Lord owns both his labours and mine. The church is crammed, the hearers are attentive—we often hear of new inquirers, especially young people; and I know of no gross miscarriages among those who profess the gospel. Last time we had more than 300 communicants. We are situated, as it were, upon an island. The storms of controversy and dissention which make such havoc upon that *great continent*, the religious world, are not permitted to reach our peaceful shore. We know but little of them, and that little only by report. I may truly say, (O that I could say it with due thankfulness) the lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place.

As to myself, I am in *statu quo*. I am a year older than when I went to Southampton last summer; in other respects I am much the same. I feel but little abatement either of bodily or mental powers. In spirituals I have nothing to boast of. I am poor and needy, but I trust the Lord careth for me. I hope it is not worse with me than in former times. I seldom have the *sunshine* of *sensible* comfort, but I am favoured

with *day-light*. I certainly do not walk by sight, but I hope it is given me to walk by faith, and to maintain a conscience void of offence. Long experience and advancing years have gradually weakened my attachment to the present world, especially since the removal of my late dear partner. The Lord has so smoothed my temporal path that I can think of nothing worth a wish, to add to my comfort: yet the best, and the whole of it, would scarcely make me desirous of living here another day, but for the sake of my profession and ministry. For these, I am willing to live my appointed time. May I live, while I do live, to him, and be found ready and willing to depart when he shall see fit to call me hence. The rest I wish to leave, without anxiety or choice, to him who does all things well.

But though I have been remarkably exempted from outward trials since the year 1790, I have an inward warfare. I am a poor creature still—when I would do good evil is present with me. My best is defective and defiled, and needs pardon before it can hope for acceptance: but, through mercy, my hope is built, not upon frames and feelings, but upon the atonement and mediation of Jesus. When I am called home, I trust I shall leave all my abominations behind me, as my dear friend Cowper says in his hymn—

> "One view of Jesus as he is
> Will strike all sin for ever dead."

If I do not write often, you have a good quantity at a time, when it comes. Let us pray for each other, and may the Lord hear and answer. I only add an assurance that I am

Affectionately yours,

J. N.

LETTER XXXVII.

LONDON, April 2, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,

I KNOW not how much matter I have to thank you for, but it seems high time to make some acknowledgment, though at present, perhaps, I must be brief. I have but just seen your friend, Miss D***, and told her that we should be glad to see her again. Send as many Scots folks as you please; if they bring the olive leaf in their mouth, they will be welcome at No. 6.

I rejoice in the success of the northern mission. May it still increase! Yes! I trust the Lord is spreading and reviving his work in our land, and if so, I care not by what instruments, or under what mode or name the good cause is promoted.

Mr. H*** brought me Mr. Black's Sermon on Tuesday, but I have not yet had time to read it. My hands are full, full, full, and my growing years do not add to my activity.

I cannot speak as you do of remarkable discoveries, &c. I trust I do walk by faith; I certainly do not walk by sight. All my hope, light, and comfort is derived from a little book which I can carry in my pocket. It is given to me to believe that what I read in this book is true. I find my malady, with all its symptoms, accurately described, and having tried the remedy therein proposed, I feel, in a measure, the good effects. Though my cure is not yet perfected, I trust I am in a state of convalescence, and that I shall not die but live. I would be thankful for daylight, and I should like to share with you in the sunshine; but the Lord knows what is best for me. On the other side, I am seldom tempest-tossed. I am more frequently *becalmed* and inert, than agitated with storms; and I am such a fair-weather sailor, that I seem content to go quietly on, though my progress is but slow.

I believe they who come the nearest to the apostle's translation, (2 Cor. xii.) must have a proportionable share of his thorn in the flesh, and the buffetings of Satan. A ship would be in danger, with a strong wind and much sail abroad, unless *well ballasted*. I am often obliged to row for want of wind. Rowing is not so pleasant, nor so speedy a movement, as sailing; but it is more free from the risk of being overset. Any thing should be welcome that checks the growth of that abomination, pride; and that worst of all

abominations, spiritual pride. The Lord is pleased to afford me much liberty and acceptance in my public service, if I was equally comfortable in private, I know not what might be the event, for my heart is still desperately wicked, and deeply deceitful.

I suppose the introduction to the Northern Tour will not be relished by every one: but the arguments in favour of itinerancy and lay preaching will not be easily refuted. Yet still, I think, lay preachers should be sent, if not by bishops, consistories, or elders, at least by some religious persons or societies, who are competent to judge of their fitness. Perhaps even this would not be necessary if all who undertake the service were men of character and abilities, like your friends, and influenced by their motives. But the position, that every man *who thinks himself* qualified to preach, has therefore a warrant to go forth, is productive of many bad effects on our side of the Tweed. Some of them, though thy can smite with the hand, stamp with the foot, and speak with a loud voice, do not well understand what thy say, nor whereof thy affirm; their preaching is crude, often erroneous. They diffuse pride, censoriousness, antinomianism, and party rage amongst their adherents; for there are few so bad, but they have some adherents. The characters of others are very suspicious, they run about to the neglect of their proper business and their families, and

perhaps become bankrupts, and cause the good way to be evil spoken of.

It is said, (p. 13.) that if it can be shewn that one person was converted by lay preaching, it proves that the instrument was warranted to preach. But I know a man who was excluded from *****'s society, for known and repeated acts of wickedness, and yet after his expulsion he continued preaching, and I believe he was owned to the awakening not of one or two, but of many sinners, perhaps of many scores; but I cannot think such a man had a warrant to preach. And though Paul was glad if any good was done by those who preached Christ out of envy and strife, I question if he would say they had *a warrant to preach* while in such a spirit. If all lay preachers were like-minded with Messrs. H*** and A***, I would pray the Lord to increase their number a hundred fold. We have some such in England, but not a few who would be better employed at the plough or the loom. A man who is more fond of novelty, than of honest labour or of being always called plain Tom or Dick, having a good stock of self-conceit, transforms himself into a preacher —he then excepts to be styled Mr. Thomas, perhaps the Rev. Mr. Thomas, to be excused from work, and to look almost like a gentleman. I fear such motives as these may stimulate some to be missionaries, both for at *home*, and for *abroad*. When these are invited to the houses of the af-

fluent, courted and caressed by people of the first characters, laden with gifts and presents, &c. considering what human nature is, I cannot wonder if this sudden transition, from obscurity to honour and public notice, has a tendency to turn their heads, and make them think themselves persons of no small consequence. I pray for the coming of our Lord's kingdom, but it has not usually come with ostentation, and as it were with sound of trumpet.

I thought to have put you off with half a sheet, but I have filled it, and therefore must write something on this, and not send you much blank paper. I must look again over your letters.

But first I must tell you that my poor old head forgot to send some copies of the sermon I lately printed, preached on the day of thanksgiving. Whether any of them have found their way to Edinburgh without my help, I know not, or whether they are yet to be had at Johnson's. I believe he sent one, at least, to be put in a volume of my detached papers. An edition of all my printings has been long in hand at Edinburgh, in 12mo. the six volumes, two Messiahs, and the smaller pieces, will make nine volumes: but when they will appear who can tell? I have expected them for about or above a twelvemonth.

I suppose I have already noticed the particulars in yours of the 23d December; but it appears to me as a new letter. Your account of the young

man executed for forgery is awful*. Sin first deceives, and then hardens. So it served me and nothing but omnipotent grace could have softened such a heart as mine. In sickness and in many dangers I seemed no more afraid of death than of sleep. Nay, had I not been re-

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* Believing it likely to be useful to insert an account of the young man to whom Mr. Newton refers, I have subjoined the following letter from my friend Mr. Aikman, minister of College-street Chapel, Edinburgh, who visi ed him while under sentence of death, (and from whom I originally had my information,) which contains a concise and impressive statement of his case.

"EDINBURGH, November 7, 1803.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"THE request of your letter brings to my remembrance one of the most melancholy examples of human depravity that I ever met with.

"The person to whom your inquiries refer, and whom I visited when under sentence of death in this city, was a youth of a most engaging address, and one who had enjoyed the advantage of a liberal education. At our first interview, when I visited him in company with our much esteemed and deceased friend, the late Mr. B***, (one of the ministers of this city) he heard what was stated with seeming attention, and appeared thankful for instruction. Previous to my seeing him a second time, he was visited by a clergyman of very opposite sentiments to those of Mr. B***. Whether it was in consequence of his instructions, or not, I cannot say; but in the course of conversation upon this occasion, he plainly told me, that he could by no means accede to the doctrine of salvation by free and sovereign grace. If men were to be saved, he was

strained by a strong invisible hand, I should probably have destroyed myself; for my life was miserable, and I thought myself quite sure, like the French philosophers, that death was an *eternal sleep*. Was ever such a wretch, such a signal monument of mercy!

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persuaded it must be in consequence of their good works. I observed to him, that in this case his situation was unspeakably alarming He was now under sentence of death, and in all probability would suffer the execution of that sentence. In his present circumstances, chained as he was to the floor of a prison, he was precluded from the very possibility of doing any good work, or of making any reparation to society for any part of his past misconduct. Such sentiments therefore, I observed, must necessarily exclude him from all hope towards God.

"He perceived the justice of this melancholy inference, and acknowledged that he was certainly condemned upon his own principles. I was much affected with the unhappy condition of this youth, and endeavoured with all possible tenderness and affection, to warn him of his danger, and to lead his attention to the gospel, which is so completely and divinely adapted to impart peace and hope to the very worst of men, if they receive its blessed message: but all was in vain. He buoyed himself up, I believe, with the hope of life, yet so little influence had his professed principles upon his conduct, that in endeavouring to make his escape from the prison, (in which he was unsuccessful) he made an attempt on the life of the turnkey. When he found that all his plans were defeated, he swallowed poison with a view to avoid the ignominy of a public execution: but in this also his object was frustrated. Medical assistance being obtained, the effects of

I know not if infidelity has greatly spread, though the avowal of it is more public. Many, perhaps most, were heart-infidels before they read the books to which they ascribe their new wisdom. But the writings of Paine and others, like the spear of Ithurial, have brought them forth in their true characters. Infidelity is now enthroned at Rome. Popery is no more, for there is no more pope, and many of the cardinals have sung hymns to the praise of French liberty: but the Roman Catholic religion, so called, still subsists, in many parts of Christendom. Therefore I think, infidelity has not done all its work. It will proceed to the extent of its commission, but no farther; and when it has finished its work, it will receive its wages. How far this commission may reach, we know not, but we know the Lord

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the poison were so far counteracted that his life was preserved until the day appointed by the law, when he publicly suffered the sentence annexed to his offence.

"The foregoing mournful history needs no comment. To those who know the grace of God it will suggest motives for thanksgiving to that God by whose grace they have been made to differ, and it will surely lead us to commiserate deeply, the situation of those unhappy men, who, in the near prospect of eternity, are taught to put their trust in refuges of lies, by men who are the decided enemies, while professing to be the friends of the Lord Jesus.

"I am, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

"JOHN AIKMAN."

has marked the bounds beyond which it cannot pass. I think neither Mr. Fleming, nor any other commentator of the prophets foresaw the wonderful revolution which has taken place within these four yours. They thought France would be scourged, but were not aware that France was to be the scourge of Europe.* Events are the best expounders of prophecy. May not Dan. vii. 25. have some reference to these times: but I stop. My business is to preach Jesus Christ crucified, and leave temporal concerns in the hands of him whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure. Verily it shall be well with the righteous. He will either preserve them from the evils they apprehend, or give them strength according to their day. It will make little difference to them a hundred years hence,

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* The following is the extract from Willison's Balm of Gilead, a book published about the year 1740, to which Mr. Newton referred, p. 9.

"Before antichrist's fall, one of the ten kingdoms which supported the beast shall undergo a marvellous revolution, Rev. xi. 13. 'The same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell' By which *tenth part* is to be understood one of the ten kingdoms into which the great Romish Babylon was divided. This, many take to be the kingdom of FRANCE, it being the tenth and last of the kingdom as to the time of rise, and that which gave Rome the denomination of the beast with ten horns; and also it being the only one of the ten kingdoms, that was never conquered since its rise."

whether they lived here in peace, or in the midst of trouble.

He says to his people, See that ye be not terrified. Lo, I am with you always, your sun and your shield. But he likewise commands them to watch and pray. that they may maintain a spirit suitable to the times in which they live. We have no just cause to be afraid for ourselves, if we are duly affected with the sin and misery that surrounds us. There is a secret mark of protection put upon those who sigh and mourn for what they cannot prevent. The Lord is pleading his own cause, and the glory of his holy name should be the nearest and dearest concern to our hearts. But though I can write with much seeming composure while I sit quietly by the fire-side, I am aware that if such things as we have deserved, were actually to come upon us, I should tremble like a leaf, and prove a very coward, if left to myself. But he has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. I rest my hope upon his faithful promise.

My health and ability for public service are still mercifully preserved. Dear Miss C***, and all my little family, are tolerably well. I trust we have tokens of his favourable presence in our assemblies. Hitherto the Lord has helped us. I have good reason to praise him for what is past, and have I not equal reason to trust him for the future?

We unite in love to you, and all friends, as if named, and request a continuance of your prayers for me and mine. May the Lord bless you in all your concerns and connexions.

I am

Your affectionate friend and servant,

J. N.

LETTER XXXVIII.

London, July 5, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT seems I wrote the 2d April, yet it does not seem so long to me. Mr. Grimshaw is no hindrance. I have not touched him for more than a twelvemonth past. I hope to take him with me to Southampton, (if the Lord permits me to go thither as I propose in about a fortnight,) and, if possible, to finish Mr. Grimshaw while I am there. The truth is, business and years increase together. I have more to do than formerly, and cannot do so much. But I need not apologize to you, because whoever falls short, you are served. I have no correspondent to whom I write so many and such long letters as to yourself.

I have so many good friends call upon me from Scotland, that the idea of Mr. Miller is lost in the groupe. I remember his name but no

more. I trust we shall know each other better when we meet again.

I find Lady L*** is gone home: but your dependence, for support to your plans, was upon the Lord, not upon a lady. I trust he will find ways and means to enable you to go on. Whoever dies Jesus lives. Remember Professor Frank, and what he did without any fund; he lived by faith from day to day, from hand to mouth. He trusted in the Lord, and was not ashamed.

I call the latter part of your letter a gospel newspaper, and it really contains much good news. A fig for names and forms, if the truth is preached, and sinners are converted.

Yesterday brought me an acceptable letter from Captain H***. As it is the first, I wish to answer it speedily, and having a little time at command, I must, as they say, rob Peter to pay Paul, and break off from you abruptly, to attend upon him. I shall be glad if you can find your way to London, provided you do not come till towards the middle of September, if I go to Southampton.

Wherever you are, I hope, pray, and believe the Lord will be with you, and I humbly trust he will likewise mercifully be with,

Yours affectionately,

J. N.

LETTER XXXIX.

SOUTHAMPTON, September 12, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,

THIS comes rather to acknowledge than to answer your two letters; for being upon the remove, I inadvertently packed them up, not expecting leisure to write here; but as I have a spare hour, and expect to be fully taken up with indispensables for a time, when I return home, I will write something now, lest you should think me negligent or ungrateful.

We left London the 19th July, were one week at Reading, and have been here the rest of the time. I hope to see No. 6. the 19th instant. I should leave this pleasant place, and these kind friends with more reluctance, if I was not going home; and thus though we have many friends and comforts in this world, yet one bright powerful view of our heavenly home, will, when the time comes, I trust, make us willing, and ready, and glad to leave all below.

Mr. Grimshaw's life, of which I undertook to give some account, has lain by untouched two years, and perhaps I never should have been able to finish it, if I had not brought it with me, and likewise made a resolution to write no letters while abroad (necessary business excepted) till I

had done with Mr. Grimshaw. This is the reason why you have not heard from me sooner, (for I love to have you in my debt) for I have served all my friends alike. I have now finished what I intended, according to the ability the Lord has given me. If all is well, I hope it will appear in print before Christmas. I shall send a few to you, but they must be for sale, as I have devoted the profits of the first edition (at least) to the use of the Society for the Relief of the Poor Clergy. This reminds me to inquire after Colonel Blackader, the christian soldier. When will he be ready to march forth from the press into the shops?

I preached here three evenings in the week, as I believe I told you I did the last two years. My friend, Mr. T***, has made accommodations to receive about 300 people, and we are sometimes full. To-morrow evening will be my farewell sermon. Being now in my 74th year, I seem to take a final leave of my friends in every place. It may be otherwise, as my health is remarkably good, and I have but few of the symptoms of advancing age. I am in the Lord's hand, willing to live, (no one has less reason from externals to be weary of life) and if the Lord is pleased to be with me, when the time comes, I shall not be afraid to die. He has promised strength according to our day, and I aim to rely upon his faithful word.

Notwithstanding the threatening of the French, and the confusion and misery which they have spread over the greater part of Europe, and which has reached even to our sister kingdom, we, in this island, are still preserved in internal peace. Is not this wonderful? To me it appears almost miraculous. May we not accept his repeated interpositions in our favour, as a token for good; that though he will chasten, he will not destroy us, nor give us up to the will of them that hate us? May we not accept it as an answer to the prayers of his remnant amongst us? A small remnant indeed, compared with the nation at large, but not very small in the aggregate number. If all who stand in the breach, pleading for mercy, could be brought together into one place, I trust they would appear a goodly company. And though they are dispersed and scattered up and down the land, the salt of the earth, which preserves it from total putrefaction, yet in his view they are all one connected army, who meet and unite daily, and often, at the same rallying point, the throne of grace. Is not the spirit that is engaged to spread the gospel at home, as well as abroad, another token for good, at such a time as this? Far from recalling his ambassadors, which might have an awful appearance of war, I trust he is increasing their numbers, and enlarging their powers. Many neglected barren spots, in different parts of our kingdom, are already begin-

ning to rejoice and blossom as the rose. I question if any thing you see in Scotland can give you an idea of the ignorance and wretchedness that reign in many of our parishes, where they are no less destitute of the form than of the power of godliness, where the church doors are seldom opened, even on the Lord's day—where three-fourths of the children of ten or twelve years of age cannot tell their letters. But these evils are diminishing partly by the Sunday schools in some places, and partly by the village preaching which the evangelical dissenters are setting forward in most of our counties, and in which I, though not a dissenter, greatly rejoice, and daily pray for their success. If the official shepherds know not to feed or to care for, either themselves or their flocks, I would be thankful that others are stirred up to supply their lack of service. I care not much for order, regularity, or commission in such a case. When a house is on fire, people of any party or profession are welcome to bring water to extinguish it, whether churchmen or kirkmen, elders, or ploughmen.

The ways of God, in his providence, are untraceable by us; but we are sure they are right. They would not be *his* ways, if we could comprehend them: Isai. lv. 8, 9. But our path of duty lies plain and straight before us: Ezek. ix. 4.

Remember me to all friends. I have more in Edinburgh than I have room or time to name.

The Lord bless us all, and give us one heart and mind, to promote his glory, and the good of our fellow-creatures, in our respective posts: and then we need fear nothing for ourselves. Miss C*** joins in respects and best wishes, with

Your affectionate friend,

J. N.

LETTER XL.

LONDON, December 4, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT is high time to bring you into my debt again, as you were before I received yours of the 7th November. I am glad to find that you are more and more engaged in useful services, even though it should render your letters shorter and less frequent than formerly. I know not that my business is much upon the increase, but my ability to manage it is certainly upon the decline. I once could sit many hours in the day at my pen, now two hours weary me. I begin to feel a want of that energy and application, which I have sometimes possessed; and I am afraid lest I exculpate myself too easily by charging the whole blame upon old age: yet I cannot reasonably expect to do as much at 74 as I could at 50.

I cannot with truth plead guilty to the charge of wilful indolence: yet upon a review of almost every day, it seems to have passed in a sort of

busy idleness. We are directed even if we have done our duty, to confess ourselves unprofitable servants—what then must I say, conscious that I come so lamentably short in all things, and that my best attempts are both defective and defiled?

On Friday the 23d, when rising, after a good night, and in perfect health, I fell down. I fell several times before I was convinced that I could not stand. The strength of my left leg was withdrawn, without any pain or numbness. I was, for a time, led about the room, not being able to walk across it, without support. I kept house on the Lord's day. But means were used, and the prayers of my affectionate people and friends prevailed for a blessing on them. Last week I was enabled to preach both Wednesday and Thursday (the Thanksgiving-day.) Yesterday I preached twice, and distributed the bread at the Lord's table to more than 300 communicants, and to-day I have walked more than a mile in the streets; so that you may set me down as *well:* and I hope you will praise the Lord on my behalf, and continue to pray for me.

The missionaries, who brought your letter, called when I was at church; they did not come again, so that I have not seen them. One married missionary named ***, was with me two hours, and I liked him much. They seem to be chiefly very young folks; but if their hearts and views be right before the Lord, he will teach

them to profit apace, and enlarge their minds and experience, as occasions require. There is none teacheth like him, and where he bestows a humble and dependent spirit, every other good will follow. I suppose by this they are all safe on board the Duff, at Portsmouth. May the Lord of the sea and the dry land, who steered the ark of Noah to its appointed place, bless them while on their passage, and dwell in their hearts and houses, wherever his providence may fix them!

I loved J*** L***. I believe he was a truly upright honest man, though in some things a little eccentric. I know he has long been a sufferer, and therefore I am not sorry that the days of his mourning are ended. I have lost a true friend, but my loss is his gain, and I trust we shall soon meet in a better world.

You send good news of M***. May the Lord strengthen and bless him! When great awakenings take place among people who are grossly ignorant of the scriptures, there are frequently some extraordinary appearances. It was so among our first Methodists, under Messrs. Wesley, Whitfield, Berridge, &c. It was so in the great revival in America, which began under Mr. Edwards: so likewise at Kilsyth. The Lord permits it, perhaps for two reasons: 1st, These stirs engage the attention of the neighbourhood, and prompt many to hear, who otherwise would

not. 2d, There are those who want something to cavil at, and these things furnish them with the occasions they wish for, according to the prophecy, Isai. viii. 14, 15. The light comes; but they who love darkness think themselves justified in opposing the light, on account of these incidental blemishes, which, therefore, they are glad to expatiate upon. Messrs. ****'s were good men, but they were bigots in the extreme; and because they had left the kirk, they took it for granted that the Lord had forsaken it likewise, and therefore hastily concluded that the work could not be *his*. I have heard that they fasted, and prayed the Lord to put a stop to it. Well may we say, "Lord what is man!"

I thank you for your notes of Colonel Blackader.* I expected his letters, though only written to his wife, would afford some variety. I hope you will, at least, find enough for a publication. The memory of such a man, in such a situation,

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* One of these notes was the following short, but remarkable letter, written by the Colonel to Lady ——— Campbell at Stirling, from the field of battle at Blenheim, dated August 2, 1704, said to be written on a drum head, instead of a table.

"I am just now retired from the noise of drums, of oaths, and dying groans. I am to return in a few minutes to the field of battle, and wrapping myself up in the arms of Omnipotence, I believe myself no less safe as to every valuable purpose, than if sitting in your ladyship's closet."

should be preserved, and his example held up for the instruction of our modern warriors.

Mr. Grimshaw has been three weeks with the printer to-day, but I have only one sheet from the press—at this rate we may wait till March for his appearance: but I hope we shall go on faster. Poor authors have need of a good stock of patience. However, all our concerns are in a higher hand, and I hope Mr. Grimshaw will be seen, whether sooner or later, just at the right time.

The close of your letter pleases me. I shall rejoice to see you once more before I go hence. Forecast, and contrive to stay as long as you possibly can, and be sure to reserve one whole day for me. On a Tuesday or a Saturday I can usually be at home from morning till night. Hoping to have you soon, I shall conclude with my prayers and best wishes for your welfare. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, and cause his face to shine upon thee. I only add Miss C***'s respects, and subscribe myself, with love to all friends,

Your very affectionate,

J. N.

9 P. M.

LETTER XLI.

LONDON, February 4, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I do not promise to fill this large sheet, perhaps I may. My first point is to tell you the egg [Grimshaw] is hatched, is now at the bookbinders to be put into boards; I think it will be fledged, and fly about the town, in a few days. I do not offer one even to you as a present, as I have many friends in Scotland, to whom I would be glad to offer such a token of respect, and as I must buy what I should give away, I serve you all alike.

I think, in London, tabernacles might be built in every street, without giving umbrage; and indeed places of that cast are springing up, like mushrooms, frequently: but then it is an old matter with us. When Mr. Whitfield and Wesley first began, there was stir enough. People were alarmed as if St. Paul's and the monument were to be overturned; but these fears have been long since quieted.

When men have gone on for a long course of years in the same train of thinking and practice, they cannot easily, and at once, shake off their old prejudices. If we duly consider human nature, and the force of habit, we shall not expect it. I suppose there was a time when the erection

of a theatre gave the good people of Edinburgh no small uneasiness; but now, perhaps, they can walk by it without trembling. If builders of tabernacles are conscious that they only aim at promoting the glory of God and the good of souls, and have no design to give offence either to church or state, I would advise them to waive disputes as much as possible, say, "Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord." Let them leave their cause in his hands, and he will plead it. When, instead of this, we are very anxious and earnest to vindicate ourselves, he often leaves us to make the best of it that we can, and very often that *best* turns out but badly. The believers at Jerusalem were in a great bustle when they first heard that Peter visited Cornelius. What! an apostle go to eat and drink with the uncircumcised! Such a thing was never known before! But when they found that the Lord had sent him, they held their peace. Let us remember that men are but men, and that the best men have their infirmities and mistakes. Let us walk as circumspectly as we can, our brethren will, at times, have something to bear with in us; and we must pray for grace to be able to bear with them.

If you are about a good work, Satan will do all he can to discourage and hinder you; but he cannot break his chain, nor go beyond it. He cannot hurt us, unless we give him advantage by indulging unbelief or impatience.

How much am I obliged to my kind friends for their concern when they heard I was ill, and especially for their prayers. I am bound to pray for them. I am still remarkably well, but I am old; I must go the way of all flesh. Pray for me that I may live to the Lord while I do live, that I may finish my course without staining my profession, and that I may depart in peace. As to the time, whether sooner or later, I wish to leave to him who doth all things well; only, may I be found ready when the time comes.

You say, you have more to do, one way or another, than you can well manage. It is my own case; and my business seems to increase as my strength and abilities decrease. I think it better to have too much than too little: I mean such as lies fairly and providentially before us. If we wilfully overload ourselves with worldly concerns for the sake of adding bag to bag, that we may have the pleasure of thinking we shall leave a great many bags behind us when we go—this is a bustle and an ambition unworthy a child of God. They who are running a race should not encumber themselves with needless weight. I am persuaded this is not your turn; but while you have a secular calling, it is your duty to be active and accurate in it. You are acting for the Lord as his journeyman, and when you are engaged in business, in a right frame of mind, you are no less serving the Lord, than when you are praying,

exhorting or hearing. Every thing is beautiful in its proper season. Self likes to be employed in great matters—grace teaches us to do small and common things with a great spirit. A servant-maid, when cleaning the kitchen, may be as well employed as a Mr. S*** preaching the gospel through Scotland; and if she give him a cup of cold water for his master's sake, and can do no more, she shall have a prophet's reward. It is the intention that the Lord chiefly regards; and he will reward his upright and devoted people, not according to what they are actually able to do, but according to what they would have done if they could. 1 Kings viii. 18, 19. Luke xxi. 3. Mark xiv. 8. Eph. vi. 8. Col. iii. 23, 24.

I have buried an old faithful servant, who had been with us more than twenty years. I have two others, one has lived with me about fourteen years, and the other thirteen; so that we are all growing old together, and I trust we shall all live together in a better world. Remember us to all whom we know. The Lord bless you and them, and us also. Amen.

I am

Your very affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XLII.

London, March 28, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * * * *

I praise the Lord for your candle-light deliverances, Psal. cxii. 4. You do well to acknowledge his hand and care in those events which the world consider as trivial. The way of man is not in himself. Our greatest concerns are so dependent upon small contingencies, that it is not easy to determine which are of the most importance. Our experience may be compared to the movement of a watch, in which the little pivots are no less necessary in their places than the spring or the wheels. See Mark xiv. 13. John iv. 7. Acts. xxvii 31. 1 Kings xxxii. 34. *Cum multis aliis.* Take away the pivots, and the whole machine is useless.

Time was when I could write eight hours in a day, and now this short letter has almost wearied me: yet I have more than threescore lying by me, which ought to be answered, and some of them have lain by more than a twelvemonth. Write me as soon as you can.

I am

Your affectionate,

J. N.

LETTER XLIII.

LONDON, May 28, 1799.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE only time to say, I have sent you a sort of preface to Colonel Blackader. While writing I was led into a train of which I had no thought when I began. Such as it is, if you like it—well—if not, suppress it, and get some one at Edinburgh to write another. There are many good writers among your acquaintance. I find at the age of 74 I cannot do as formerly; but I am as much as ever, and I hope I always shall be,

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XLIV.

LONDON, Oct. 21, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

TIME was, when you received frequent and long letters from me; but times are altering. I shall always love you, but my letters will probably decrease in number and in size; for I grow old: but yours to me will, I hope, be frequent and full.——So far I wrote a fortnight ago, and have not had leisure to proceed till this 21st October.

Yours of the 27th July found us at Southampton. It brought the good news of your safe return home. I was thankful for the courage and prudence the Lord gave you on ship-board: they are both christian graces, when connected; but if separated, courage degenerates into rashness, and prudence into cowardice.

I must and do rejoice in the success of respectable itinerants in places sadly destitute of the gospel. I expect there will be some mixture of human infirmity in the best designs of the best men; and satan will be busy when he feels his kingdom shaken. But the Lord will accept the intentions of his faithful servants, and overrule all things eventually for good. He will plead their cause, and put their enemies to shame and to silence, if they can but simply and patiently commit it to him: but if they take it too much into their own hands, they usually make bad worse. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We should disclaim, not only fire and sword, but angry disputation and invective; for these likewise are carnal weapons. The apostle says, *Being defamed we entreat.*

Through mercy there is some stir among the soldiers with us likewise, and among the seamen in the navy. May the Lord confirm them, and increase their numbers!

Now for yours of the 28th September. I am glad to hear you have so much to produce of

Colonel Blackader. May you live to see it in print, whether I do or not. You are not in your 75th year.

The news from Orkney and Shetland is pleasant indeed. I pray the Lord to bless the labourers more and more. I pray the Lord to warm your heart, and to guide your pen, while you are writing to the young people.

Last week I was at Clapham, and saw the twenty African blackbirds.* The girls were at Battersea, out of my reach. When I went into the school, I said *Lemmi*, which is, being interpreted, How do you do? Two or three answered *Bah*, that is, I thank you. By which I knew that they had some knowledge of the language of *Sherbro'*, the scene of my bondage. I am told the boys come forward apace, behave well, and seem very happy; and especially when they see Mr. M**y.

Continue to write long letters and often. I love to hear from you, and will thank you when I can. Pray for us. May the Lord grant that you may always answer the description of the tree mentioned in Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

I am

Your very affectionate,

22d October. J. N.

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* Twenty African boys, and four girls, who were brought over to this country for instruction, and after remaining about five years, were all sent back to the coast of Guinea, except three or four who died while in England.

LETTER XLV.

LONDON, March 4, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * * * * *

Though the eye of our judgment, and the end we propose, be simple and disinterested, self, unless watched as narrowly as a cat watches a mouse, will interpose. Even Paul, eminent as he was for grace, needed both a thorn in the flesh, and a messenger from satan, to keep him from being exalted above measure, and he says of both, *They were given me.* Even a messenger from satan is a gift and a mercy, however unwelcome, if the Lord sanctifies his visit to make us mindful of our weakness and our vileness, both of which we are apt to forget in a long flow of exertion and success. Self loves to be very busy and very useful, and who can blame him? But if an ounce of grace, so to speak, will suffice to carry us on in active life, it may require a pound to keep us submissive and quiet by the fire-side. The Lord stands not in need of sinful man, nor will he ever want instruments to carry on his work. They are happy whom he honours to be his servants in the gospel, provided they give themselves up to him without reserve, depend upon him, and lie low in the dust before him.

The Lord abhors pride and self-importance. The seeds of these evils are in the hearts of his own children; but rather than suffer that which he hates to remain in those whom he loves, he will in mercy pound them as in a mortar, to beat it out of them, or to prevent its growth.

The account of your Highland tour is pleasant and interesting. I hear of no such sudden, general awakenings in our kingdom: but I hope the gospel does spread, though more gradually and silently, especially in the Establishment. Several very promising young men are ordained in the course of the year; and the number of serious students in both the universities seems to be still increasing. I hope there is much good done likewise by the dissenting itinerancy. But I fear the savour of the good ointment is in some places injured, and its efficacy in a measure obstructed by the dead fly of *politics*. Hypothesis must give way to facts: otherwise, when I consider the *letter* or the *spirit* of the gospel, I should think it impossible, that any persons who have the glory of God and the good of souls at heart (especially preachers) could perplex themselves, or their connexions, with political matters. I am sure Paul and his brother Peter did not meddle with these matters. They lived under a most arbitrary government, and the emperors in their time, such as Nero and Caligula, were men of the most infamous and detestable characters;

yet they uniformly inculcate submission, and quiet obedience to the powers that be.

You see how large a letter I have written to you with mine own hand. Through mercy, dear Miss C*** and old Seventy-five are both as well as when you left us.

The Lord bless you and your friends, and me and mine. Let us meet often at the throne of grace, and rejoice in the hope of meeting before long, in a better world.

I am
Your affectionate and obliged,
J. N.

LETTER XLVI.

London, November 19, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you for your two long letters, the account of your progress, and the progress of the gospel, and of your safe return home. I hope a time may come, when I shall be able to write more at large. At present this is upon a particular business.

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I pray the Lord to bless you and all who love his name in Scotland, whether Kirk, Circus, Relief, Burghers, Anti-burgers, Independents, Methodists, or by whatever name they choose to be

called. Yea, if you know a Papist, who sincerely loves Jesus, and trusts in him for salvation, give my love to him. I remain

Your affectionate and obliged,

J. N.

LETTER XLVII.

LONDON, February 6, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE before me four of your letters, in eight sheets; one dated Castle Douglas, two Edinburgh, and the last Glasgow, January 31, this year. It is high time I should at least thank you for them, though I cannot go through all the particulars.

No. 1 and 2 give an interesting account of your western progress. I rejoiced in the encouragement you received, and I smiled at your arrest. How comfortable to think that all hearts and events are in his hands.

No. 3 reminds me that I have written to you since the receipt of the two former. It tells me likewise of Dr. D***'s seasonable interposition in favour of Mrs. R***. This likewise I ascribe to the Lord's providential care, in answer to prayer. Who is like the Lord our God! who humbleth himself to notice the things in heaven! In whose sight the earth and all its inhabitants are but as dust! a mere nothing. Yet, while he

names and numbers the stars, and upholds them all in their orbits, he condescends to heal the broken heart, to sooth the sorrowful spirit, to provide for the fatherless and the widow. Faith is tried like gold in the fire; if the gold is pure, it suffers no loss, but it does not gain and grow in the fire as faith does. We are not warranted to pray for troubles; if we have a due sense of our weakness, we shall rather pray, with submission to his will, "Lead us not into temptation." Yet when we pray for grace, more grace, and stronger grace, we do virtually pray for troubles, for such petitions are seldom answered, but by crosses. See Olney Hymns, book II. No. 36.

I can assure you I have no acquaintance with Indian nabobs. Messrs. **** being men of fortune, have proportionably a greater number of applications, and I suppose are as much overloaded as I am. You would admire how frugally they live themselves, that they may have it the more in their power to feed others. Their public situation requires some expense which they would otherwise gladly avoid. Possibly there are tradesmen in Edinburgh, who live more in the style of nabobs than my rich friends: but they have the pleasure of feeding many poor, and of doing much good.

Your story about the drummer and his boy is very affecting, and shows the sovereignty and power of grace, which can work upon any per-

son, in any circumstances, either by or without the use of public means, with equal ease.* I trust the number of the Lord's hidden ones is not small. We sometimes meet with such in places where we do not expect to find them. I think this a great advantage of our Established

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* When on a preaching tour with a friend, we met with a pious drummer belonging to a regiment quartered in a town which we visited We invited him to sup with us in the inn. After supper we requested him to favour us with his history, which he did with great modesty and seriousness in the following words, which are as nearly his own as I can recollect. I have been (said he,) twenty-four years in the army and navy together. Till four years ago I was the wickedest wretch in either. Our regiment was then at Hull. I was seized with an unaccountable melancholy, it was not about religion. I do not know what it was, but I was miserable. One evening, as I was walking on the common, very unhappy, I observed a church lighted up, which convinced me there was sermon in it, but I durst not go lest my comrades should laugh at me for going to sermon on a week-day. I knelt upon the common, and prayed to God to give me courage to go to church. When I rose, I went directly to church. The minister was preaching upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately when I was seated, the minister said, "If it could be of the smallest service to the meanest person present, I would come down from the pulpit, and on my bended knees beseech that person to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Thought I, this must be a mighty matter surely, that a gentleman would come down from the pulpit, and on his bended knees beseech a poor drummer to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That, with the remainder

Church. I am told there are about ten thousand parishes in England; I believe more than nine thousand of these are destitute of the gospel: but they have public worship on the Lord's-day. The liturgy is in an evangelical strain, and four chapters of the bible, and about a thirtieth part of the Book of Psalms, are statedly read. By the Lord's blessing on these helps, I believe many people, who perhaps cannot read, are made wiser than their teachers; and I think were it

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of his sermon, made a deep impression on my mind. I went home to my wife: she met me at the door. I said to her, Jane, we are all wrong, we are living like beasts, we know nothing about believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Poor thing! she trembled, for she thought I was gone mad, but, said I, Jane, I am not mad, but you and I are going to destruction. I understand the bible will tell us every thing; but we have not a bible, and though we had, we cannot read it. O, said she, we can buy a bible, and our little boy, who is only twelve miles off, can read it to us. Accordingly we sent for our boy, and also bought a bible. When he came home, we desired him to begin at the first page and read forward to the end of the book. We gave him always two suppers to keep him from sleep, for he got drowsy with reading. I used to rise very early in the morning to hear more of the bible, but I would say, it is cruel to awake my boy so early, and would give him another hour of sleep; then he rose and began to read where he had stopped the preceding night, and we both sat listening to our boy reading the book. He read slow, for he had many hard words to spell. At length God opened my poor blind eyes to see that Jesus Christ was the very

not for the church service, nine-tenths of the kingdom would, in a little time, be as ignorant and wild as the American Indians.

Either you, or some friends of yours, told me, you had retired to study. Undoubtedly, now you have given up business you have more leisure time, which you will do well to improve. I know not what is the immediate object of your literary pursuits, but I hope the Lord will prevent your studying yourself out of that simplicity with which you preached while in business. I

Saviour I stood in need of. O how happy I was! Our boy read onward, and the Lord was pleased to open the poor blind eyes of my wife, so that she saw in Jesus Christ just what I saw. Now we became one of the happiest families in all Hull.

I had put myself to school that I might learn to read, and in a few months I was able to read nearly as well as my little boy. I determined that my house should be a house of prayer, and my door open to all who should choose to come. I told my comrades I had now begun to pray to God, and read his word every morning and evening; and I should be glad of their company at these times. Several attended to make sport. When I could not make out a long word, then they all laughed, but I thought now, a few months ago I would have laughed at these things as well as them, but if God opens their eyes as he has mine, they will laugh no more at these things—so I read on as well as I was able. By and by some of them became very serious, but drink and wicked company did them much injury. One of them however remains very steadfast to this day.

hope you will study Jesus Christ and him crucified. Study the *text* of the good word of God. Beware of great books. The first christians had none to read, yet they lived honourably and died triumphantly. Beware of leaning too hard upon human authority, even the best; you may get useful hints from sound divines, but call no man *master*. There are mixtures of human infirmity, and the prejudices of education or party, in the best writers. What is good in them, they obtained from the fountain of truth, the scriptures; and you have as good a right to go to the fountain-head yourself. If you had been designed earlier for the ministry and the kirk, you must have worn the college-trammels, and in order to have obtained a license, you must have learnt many things, which you might afterwards wished in vain to forget. But the Lord seems to have called you as he did the prophet. See Amos iv. 14, 15. I object not to your adding to your stock of general knowledge, so far as it is made subordinate and subservient to the main point; but watch and pray, that your studies may not rob you of life and unction, and betray you into a nice, critical, curious, and dry manner of preaching. If you need not this caution, I know you will at least excuse and accept it as a token of my good-will. The effect of your own meditation and prayer over a text of scripture, will afford you more light, warmth, strength, and

comfort, than the perusal of a large book upon the subject: and what you thus receive from the Lord, you will deliver also to the people, and you will deliver it as you have received it.—When it comes warm from your heart, it will warm the hearts of your hearers.

Permit me likewise to advise you, to avoid all controversial points as much as possible. To preach the simple truth is the best preservative from error, as the best way of keeping tares out of the bushel is to fill it with wheat before hand. The religion that cometh from above, though founded upon doctrines, is not so much a string of sentiments, in what we call a system, as a new nature, a new life. If a man be not born again, it signifies little, whether he be called Calvinist or Arminian, whether he belong to Church or Kirk, Relief, Circus, or Tabernacle. He may have a name to live amongst his party, but he is dead, and incapable, as to spirituals, as the stones in the street. On the other hand, if he be born from on high, he is a new creature, and though he may be for a season, under many incidental mistakes, the grace which has called him will prevail over all, and will teach him, in due time, all that the Lord sees needful for him to know. His children will all see eye to eye in heaven, but they have not all equal light upon earth. Who teacheth like him? He taught his disciples gradually, as they were able to bear it: but we

are apt to be too hasty tutors. Pope Self, if he is not checked, will expect his pupils to receive, at one hearing, all that he says, and upon the authority of his saying it, and is angry if they do not. Calvinists should be the meekest and most patient of all men, if consistent with their own principle, "That a man can receive nothing unless, and until it is given him from above." Let us preach the deity and atonement of the Saviour—the influences of the holy Spirit—the dreadful evil of sin, as exhibited in the sufferings of Christ, when treated as a sinner for our sakes—the new birth—and the nature and necessity of that holiness, which is an essential part of salvation, and without which no man shall see the Lord. These points will accord with the feelings of all who are truly taught of God; and if, in some things, they be otherwise minded, he will, in due time, reveal it unto them, if he sees it necessary. Thus he taught us step by step, shewing much patience and long-suffering towards us, though we were dull scholars, and thus may we learn of him, to speak the truth in love.

I am glad to keep my friends, so long as the Lord is pleased to spare them; but when they are called home, I do not much grieve, if I can follow them in my thoughts to the kingdom of glory. If ministers, I know they did not die, till their appointed labours and trials were completed; and I know that he will never want in-

struments to carry on his work. He can bring them even from Africa. There is not a person in Britain more unlikely or unfit for his service than I once was: but grace has long and strong arms, and his mercy is boundless!

I am glad you are upon your guard against the snares of kind friends. We are usually more hurt by the smiles than by the frowns of men. But happy is the man who feels his own weakness, and looks for safety to him, who alone is able to keep him from falling.

I have tried hard to send you one long letter more. Whether it will be the last the Lord only knows. If he is with us, we are not necessary to each other. He will care for us. Let us meet at the throne of grace daily and hereafter! Oh what a prospect! Words, yea thoughts fail; we cannot conceive what it will be to be for ever with the Lord.

I commend you to his blessing. Pray for us.

I remain

Your affectionate friend,

J. N.

LETTER XLVIII.

LONDON, September 19, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT is high time to thank you for your kind consolatory letter of the 30th June: but my eyes

fail me, so that I cannot write much. I am under a painful dispensation, but I am mercifully supported—not by lively frames, or sensible comforts, I have seldom been favoured with these—but I am enabled, by his grace, to cleave to his written word. I believe that this affliction does not spring out of the ground, that the thing is of the Lord, and that he is wise and good, and therefore, surely does, and will do, all things well. I believe he can, and I trust he will, bring light out of this dark dispensation; but it is my part to wait his time, way, and will, with submission.

My health is good, and my spirits—I eat and sleep as usual, and preach as much, and seemingly, with as much acceptance as formerly. Perhaps I may be heard more attentively now; for they who know me, take it for granted that I could not preach at all, as things are, if the Lord himself was not to uphold me. I hope some are encouraged by observing his goodness to me: and possibly I may speak with more emphasis to the afflicted from what I feel in myself.

The Lord is a sovereign—I am a sinner. He has the same right to me and mine, as the potter over the clay; and if he has pardoned our sins, and united us to himself, all will be well at last. We ought to be willing to be placed in the most painful situation, if it may promote his glory, which should be our highest end; for he suffered much more for us than he will ever lay upon us.

And since he has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness," and promised that all shall work together for good in the final issue, I am to leave all in his hands, and am, in some measure, enabled to do so. But, I find, if the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak. Self and unbelief often assail me.

Time is short—we are travelling on, and shall soon be at home. Then, farewell sin and sorrow for ever. Heaven and eternity will make rich amends for all the sufferings which his wise plan may appoint us to endure while here.

A report has just reached me, that you have accepted a call to *****, and are settled there: but as I am not sure you are yet removed from Glasgow, I shall direct to you there, for the letter will find you out. Write as soon as convenient. Give my love to Mrs. B——e and Mr. R——n, and to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and who inquire after me. I beg all your prayers. I need them, and I prize them. My love to Mr. E——g and his mother-in-law; I thank them for thinking of us. May the Lord remember them, and do them much good.

May the Lord bless you wherever you are, and make you a blessing to many. Amen.

I am

Your affectionate and obliged,

21st Sept. J. N.

LETTER XLIX.

LONDON, January 15, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I RETURN you ****'s letter, of which I would advise you to send a copy with mine to Calcutta. I take it for granted that B*** knows something of that family.

My eyes are so dim, that I can scarcely see to write at all, nor can I read my own writing, nor could I read yours without help: therefore I must be very brief.

I am almost willing to hope the Lord is bringing us out of our affliction: but I know that his time and way must be the best: and he enables me to wait his hour with some measure of resignation. I am mercifully supported. My health is firm: and I still preach as frequently, and with as little inconvenience to myself as formerly, though now more than five months in my seventy-seventh year.

You know that I am always glad to hear from you, though I am now spoiled for a correspondent. Pray that I may be enabled to say from my heart, The will of the Lord be done.

I hope to be with you in spirit when you go to ****, and when you are there, if I should still be living.

The Lord bless you, and all who love his name, in Glasgow, and every where else. Amen.

I am

Your very affectionate,

J. N.

END OF THE LETTERS

CONVERSATIONS.

1802.

April 3. CALLED upon Mr. Newton, on my arrival from Scotland. When told who I was, he said, "I am glad you are come, but I cannot see you, my sight is so gone: I observe your face, but I cannot distinguish your features." At dinner a person remarked, that the East India Company had overset the college at Calcutta. "What a pity," said I. "No," said Mr. N. "No pity—it must do good. If you had a plan in view, and could hinder opposition, would you not prevent it?" "Yes, Sir," "Well, God can hinder all opposition to his plans—he has permitted that to take place, but he will carry on his own plan. I am learning to see God in all things—I believe not a person knocks at my door but is sent by God." The conversation turned upon the want of teeth. Mr. N. was silent for some time—at length he said, "Give over that conversation, it is too trifling for christians; let us talk about the Lord."

April 7. Speaking respecting Col. i. 28, 29, he said, "To attack human depravity with philosophy, or fine sentiments, or by extolling morality, I compare to fighting Goliath with a wooden sword. Christ was the subject of Paul's preaching, and no man did more good. One who preaches Christ should know him. Colleges can never make up the want of the knowledge of Christ. Without Christ, ministers may amuse their audience, perhaps may send them away admiring the sermon; but Paul would have thought little of this. Paul warned *every man*—*Sinners*, of hell; of existing continually in misery, if they persisted in sin. He warned *good men*, of their danger of being taken in the snare of the devil—thousands of unseen enemies surround us. To present every man *perfect*. This," said he, "is not sinless perfection—the more grace a man has, the quicker sensibility he has about sin;—nor is it the perfection of an angel, but of a child, who has all the parts of a man, but is not a man. A perfect christian is one who has all the parts of a christian, the head, the heart, the hands, &c. if we may so speak—he has faith, love, humility, &c.

"Some people confine their religion to devotional exercises, and lay great stress upon it, but these are not perfect christians: this is only a part of christianity. Some are offended at the minister who detects them in any part of their

character which is defective; but a christian is thankful when his defects are discovered to him."

April 10. After tea, Mr. N. proposed some questions for discussion. The principal ones were, What is the difference between a tender and a scrupulous conscience? How far is a scrupulous conscience obligatory?

Those present agreed, that a tender conscience must always be a well-informed one, and a scrupulous conscience not. Some were of opinion, that it is right always to obey conscience—that where it is wrong, the sin lies in not properly using the means of information. They instanced the various opinions about the Lord's supper, respecting taking it standing, sitting, or kneeling.

Mr. N. told us, that "during part of the time I was in the custom-house employ, I took a certain kind of fee which came into my pocket, which, had I thought it wrong, I would sooner have put my hand into the fire. One day I went into a house, where I saw a book of Mr. Wesley's laying on the table, which treated on different kinds of oaths, and shewing how much they were violated. This opened my mind. I mentioned my scruples to the ****, who endeavoured to remove them. He assured me, that the *****, in administering the oath, meant that these perquisites should be taken. This did not satisfy me; I wrote to two clergymen, stating

the case, for their counsel how to act. After hearing their opinions, I took no more fees. My conscience formerly was uninformed, and did not chide me; nay, on Saturday evening, when I found I had been successful that week, I thanked the Lord for it."

April 14. Mr. N. remarked, that "the communion of saints could not be easily made intelligible to the world; but a christian in London could rejoice in the conversion of a man in the East Indies, whose face he never saw, nor ever expected to see on earth. He can also feel for a congregation when they have a faithful pastor removed from them by death, though not personally acquainted with any one person in that congregation."

"A philosopher," said he, "would smile at the ignorance of a christian ploughman, who would consider the sun no larger than his cart-wheel: but the ploughman, in his turn, would be as much surprised at the philosopher's ignorance, if he attempted to persuade him that the Saviour of the world was only a mere man, like Paul. There is a greater disproportion between Jesus and Paul, than between the sun and the cart-wheel. The philosopher would not be capable of persuading the ploughman, that it was a few tall men who placed the sun in the heavens: he would find it equally hard to persuade him

that he who made atonement for sin, was only a man.

"The knowledge of arts, sciences, business, &c. are good things; but if men, going to eternity, spend all their time in pursuing these, they are mere fools; they neglect the best knowledge."

April 17. Before family worship in the morning, Mr. N. made a few pertinent remarks on Heb. ii. 14. "Abel," said he, "was a good man, a convinced sinner—made God's will his rule—he offered sacrifice. This was not a natural suggestion; it was contrary to carnal reason to think that destroying any of God's works could please him. The philosophers, in all the countries where it has been practised, have conformed to the custom of the country, but they have smiled at the practice. Cain was one of these wise reasoners, he considered it more rational to offer some of the fruits of the ground as a thank-offering.

"Bishop Warburton tells us, there was no revelation of a future state of rewards and punishments previous to the captivity, but could it not be plainly inferred from this passage. If no reward after death, it must have been considered a very dangerous thing indeed to please God, seeing it exposed a man to instant annihilation; for Cain slew Abel on that account. Cain very much re-

sembled the Pharisee, and Abel the Publican, in the New Testament. The whole of Heb. xi. contains a history of the exploits of faith."

After prayer, turning to me, he said, "When you leave London, it is probable you will never see me again. I am an old man now; but I leave the day of my death to God's choosing. He did not consult me when he should bring me into the world, and he will not do it about my going out of it. It will not do to live on past experience; it will not assist me. I must live by the day, by the hour, by the minute, on God. Recollecting I had a good meal this day week, will not feed me to-day. I must have new food, or I shall starve."

Conversing upon 2 Cor. v. 2. "House from heaven." "If it does not refer to some temporary case for holding the soul," he said, "I do not know the meaning of it. I cannot conceive of seeing without eyes, or hearing without ears. But I will tell you of a poor carpenter at Sheerness, (a wicked place,) whom I frequently went to hear, in my young days, in a small room. He used to take a good many verses for his text. When he came to a difficult one, he would say, 'We shall pass over this"—for he was a humble man. I wish many of us ministers would imitate this carpenter.

"O!" said he, "I give many good advices to others, which I do not take myself. Crosses are

good things! God does most good to man by them—they humble him, they bring him to know his dependence on God."

"Men are most disposed to notice the *power* of God. A man can hardly carry *5 cwt.* but think of the power of God which supports this ponderous world! that sun! pointing to it.

April 22. Mr. N. advised us to "beware of clever enemies to the truth, for they are generally subtle. Paul, who knew the wickedness of the human heart, and how ready men are to be carried away by winds of false doctrine, rejoiced when he beheld the steadfastness of the believers at Colosse."

April 25. Three of us who were intimately acquainted with each other met at Mr. N.'s to breakfast. "Now," said he, "I have got a triumvirate with me this morning. Before prayer, he made some observations on Heb. ii. 32, &c. He said, "We are not exposed to fire and sword, like these good men. Not that we are better than they; no, it was for the glory of God at that time. God has greater ends in view by sending trials, than the mere personal good of the individuals tried. Yes, his own glory." He considered the 35th verse as confirming the history of the woman and her children, recorded 2 Maccabees, chap. vii.

May 1. Mr. N. before prayer, read the hymn upon the Sea, in Olney collection. He remarked, "that there are monsters in the heart of man as well as in the sea, even when they do not appear. In calm weather seamen will say, if it were always this way, old wives would go to sea, but by and by the wind rises, and the water rages, and all are at their wit's end. So it is often with God's people."

After breakfast I retired with him to his study. During the conversation he stated the following circumstance:—"A minister told me of a dumb man, who was admitted a member of his church, and who made in writing a good confession. When they asked him, what he thought of Christ? he referred them to 1 Pet. ii. 7. He always referred them to the scriptures in answer to their questions.

"Mr. Polhill, a minister who lost his sight, told me he had never seen so clearly with his mind, as since he lost the use of his eyes. An old lady, who had lost her sight at the age of twelve, told me, that in ten years she lost almost all recollection of what sight was, and when I saw her, she declared she had not a wish for sight.

"Herod and Paul were cotemporaries—the latter was at least as bad a man as the former; but behold the sovereignty of God—Herod was eaten up of worms, and Paul was converted.

"The angels know when a true work of grace is begun in a man's heart, for they rejoice on the real repentance of a sinner. Depend upon it, they never were mistaken, as we have often been."

He then said many things respecting his own former character, and with great feeling and humility. "O!" said he, "I was a low despicable creature—Sir, I was not a grossly abandoned creature merely, but I fought against Jesus—I sometimes compared him with Mahomet, and gave the preference to the latter—no vice was too wretched or mean for me.

"Since French principles came amongst us, suicides have greatly increased—we hardly read a paper now without an instance or two of this."

May 7. At breakfast, Mr. N. said to a gentleman, who had lately lost a daughter by death—"Sir, if you were going to the East Indies, I suppose you would like to send a remittance before you. This little girl is just like a remittance sent to heaven before you go yourself. I suppose a merchant on 'change is never heard expressing himself thus:—O my dear ship, I am sorry she has got into port so soon! I am sorry she has escaped the storms that are coming! Neither should we sorrow for children dying."

A person present told us of two of the seamen who were under sentence of death for the mutiny at Bantry-bay, having been brought to the know-

ledge of Jesus while under that sentence. The sentence being remitted, they were sent to the hulks at Woolwich. This gentleman providentially met with a letter from one of them, named C——g, to his father, in which he complained most pathetically of the dreadful company with which he was surrounded. The letter, altogether, was a most christian one, and very well expressed. The father made sport of it, and exhibited it to the people who frequented a public house near Charing-cross, to excite laughter. By this means it came to the knowledge of this gentleman, who obtained it from the father. It is now in possession of those in power, and likely to procure their removal from the hulks. The writer was afraid of relapsing into his former profligacy, if he continued amongst the horrid company in the hulks. Upon hearing this relation, Mr. N. remarked—"They would be in a more dangerous situation were they placed amongst a set of smooth reasoners in the higher circles of life—at present they are kept on watch; in the other case they would be off their guard, and more likely to receive damage."

May 14. Mr. N. told us at breakfast, that "Mr. Collins," whom he called "archbishop of the free-thinkers, met one day with a plain countryman going to Church. He inquired where he was going? To church, Sir. What to do

there? To worship God. Pray, whether is your God a great or a little God? He is both, Sir. How can he be both? He is so great, Sir, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and so little that he can dwell in my heart. Collins declared, that the simple answer by the countryman had more effect upon his mind than all the volumes which the learned doctors had written against him."

"Dr. Taylor of Norwich," said Mr. N. "told me, one day, that he had critically examined every original word in the Old Testament seventeen times; and yet he did not see those glorious things in the scriptures which a plain enlightened christian sees in them. The Doctor had not the plain man's eyes. Criticisms in words, or rather ability to make them, is not so valuable as some may imagine. A man may be able to call a broom by twenty names, in Latin, Spanish, Dutch, Greek, &c. but my maid, who knows the way to *use* it, but knows it only by one name, is not far behind him."

The conversation turned upon the aspect of war. Some dreaded *this* would produce it, others *that*. Mr. N. observed, "We need not dispute about these causes—the Lord reigns! The philosophers long disputed whether the earth moved round the sun, or the sun went round the earth. But while they were disputing, the sun, moon, and earth were moving in their courses."

Telling us how much his memory was decayed, "There," said he, "last Wednesday, after dinner, I asked Mrs. C*** what I had been about that forenoon, for I could not recollect. Why, said she, you have been preaching at St. Mary's. Yet it is wonderful," added Mr. N. "when I am in the pulpit, I can recollect any passage of scripture I want to introduce into my sermon from Genesis to Revelation."

During another part of the conversation, he said, "I have a sun, and I know he is shining when I do not see him, and I wait till he shines again. O how seldom do we think how much we are indebted to Christ living in us! How seldom do we think of the natural life that is in us! of its being the cause of the motion of our fingers, feet, &c. But when a fainting fit comes, we fall down—this sometimes draws our attention to it. If Christ were to suspend his living in our souls, we should as quickly fall foully as in the other case."

May 21. During breakfast, Mr. N. remarked, "That if it was constant day, we never should see the stars, we never should have seen the glory of the heavens—just so, if God was not to bring us into affliction, many precious and wonderful truths of God would remain in obscurity, as to us. Physicians do not prescribe sweet cakes for medicine; no, it it is generally something that is

bitter—so when God means to give us health of soul, he generally afflicts us. Had he not afflicted me, I might have fallen into something which might have been injurious to my character as a minister, consequently dishonouring to Jesus."

A friend told me of a good old man, who said, with sorrow, to Mr. N. that he could not recollect sermons now, as he used to do when younger. Mr. N. took no notice at the time of what the old man had said; but a little after, he asked him if he recollected what he had for dinner that day month. He answered, No, he did not. "Do you think that dinner helped to support you in life?" He replied, Yes, he did. "Well," said Mr. N. "it is in that way you enjoy the word now."

May 28. Before prayer, Mr. Newton made some observations from 2 Pet. iii. 9. He began by saying—"This verse is a bone for Calvinists to pick."

He mentioned a family who had several daughters, who were desired to dress at one o'clock—to come down stairs to the drawing-room—shew themselves for an hour—return to their bedrooms and undress—and they were no more seen. "What a way," said he, "of treating children! and yet this is the way many of our fashionables act."

He told us what he called his doctrine of preventatives. It was this:—"God sends little

trials in order to prevent greater. That you may understand distinctly what I mean, I will tell you a story.

"I knew a family who were going out to India, and had secured their passage on board an Indiaman. They were happy that they were to go in so good a ship, so good a cabin, with so agreeable a captain, and so pleasant a company. They received a letter from Portsmouth, informing them they must join the ship at a certain day which was specified. They left London in time to spend two or three days with friends on the road down. These friends prevailed on them to stay two or three days beyond the time fixed, assuring them that an Indiaman going upon a voyage of two or three years, would never keep to the very day fixed for sailing, perhaps not to the week. On their arrival at Portsmouth, they found, to their great mortification, that the ship was sailed and just getting out of sight. They returned to London greatly dejected; but they were but a few days in London before they heard of the total loss of the ship in which they were to sail, (the Halsewell,) on the coast of Cornwall, and most of those on board perished. Here they had to admire the providence that detained them. The losing their passage was a little trial; but it prevented a much greater."

As this was to be my last visit previous to my return to Scotland, when I rose to go away, he

desired me to remain a little longer, adding, "you will probably see me no more." When I took my leave of him, he desired me to carry my pockets full of love from him to friends in Scotland.

1803.

HAVING returned to London on the 28th of October, 1803, I called at Mr. Newton's next morning. I found him attempting to read a little. When I told him who I was, he said, "Stop a little till I recollect myself." After being silent for about a minute, he held out his hand, saying, "I am glad to see you. I am very feeble. I never experienced before what it was to be seventy-nine."

While at dinner, conversing of the awful effects of sin in the world, he said—"That little of the effects of sin were to be seen here, in comparison of what shall be seen in the eternal world.

"Satan," said he, "frequently does great damage to the minds of God's people, in dulling their powers to perceive the truth, and their interest in the Lord. It resembles this:—Suppose my spectacles a part of my body, and while I was asleep some person painted the glasses green; in the morning, when I awoke, I should see every thing green."

On the alarming state of the country, as threatened by foreign invasion, he remarked, "All is in good hands—all things are foreseen and managed by the Lord." Then he said, "O what a creature I am—I believe, in my judgment, that no man in the world has more cause to be thankful than I; yet I am not thankful."

Nov. 1. He had many excellent remarks on providence. One was—"Rahab of Jericho had her house on the wall—I do not know when she moved to it, but had she not had her house there, it is probable she and her family would have been destroyed with the others."

When the servant was employed putting on his shoes, he looked up, saying, "I had not this trouble in Africa! for I had no shoes. Sir," [looking to me] "when I rose in the morning, and shook myself like a dog, I was dressed. For forty years past, I have thought, every waking hour, on my former misery. At worship, he read and expounded the 93d Psalm. He observed, that "the word was made flesh, took a human body, died, rose, and ascended in that body—and, at present, the Lord reigns over all in that body."

Nov. 5. Speaking of people who had met with losses, he said—"When we lived at Olney, we had a low fence before the house, within

which we used to bring up fowls. While they were very young, the fence prevented them from straying; but when they grew a little older, they used to fly over. To prevent this, Mrs. Newton clipped their wings, and that effectually prevented them from straying. God's sending losses to many of his friends, is like clipping their wings to prevent their straying."

Nov. 29. Speaking in reference to Psalm ciii. 5. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things," &c. Mr. N. said, "Bring a man to see the best covered table in the world, looking at it might gratify his eyes, but would never satisfy his mouth. We must taste before we can see that God is good."

1804.

Jan. 26. He told me that after he was settled at Olney, and had preached six sermons, he thought he had told them his whole stock, and was considerably depressed. "But," said he, "I was walking one afternoon by the side of the river Ouse; I asked myself, How long has this river run? Many hundred years before I was born, and will certainly run many years after I am gone. Who supplies the fountain from whence this river comes? God. Is not the fund for my

sermons equally inexhaustible?—the word of God Yes, surely. I have never been afraid of running out since that time." I asked if he had consumed all the variety in the bible now he was an old man and an old minister. He smiled, and said, "O no, Sir; O no, Sir."

April 20. Mr. N. in the course of conversation, observed, that—"No man looking at the grub-worm in the garden would ever suspect that it would become a butterfly; so neither doth it appear what believers shall be."

October 9. Conversing of some remarkable conversions, and the wickedness on board some war-ships, he said—"Had I a medicine that could cure all diseases, I would not deal much with people who had only a cut finger to cure; I should go among inveterate distempers, that the power of my medicine might be more manifest. God often acts so."

Speaking of the little success of the Sierra Leone settlement—"Wait," said he, "an hundred years first. God is not often so quick with his works as men would have him to be. I once heard of a gardener who boasted that he could sow sallad when the meat was put to the fire, and have it ready for eating before the meat was roasted. This is seldom God's way."

Speaking of the glory of Jesus, he said—"O how little I love him, but I am sure I desire to love him."

A friend told me, that some of the first missionaries who went out to Otaheite, called upon Mr. N. one morning. Among other inquiries they asked, what books he would recommend to take with them. In answer to which, he said he would tell them a story. "There was a man and his wife who had no book but the bible. In this they read daily, and received much comfort. One day their minister from the pulpit, recommended some commentary. They attended to his recommendation, for they purchased the commentary, and sat down to read it. After reading in it for some time, the man asked his wife, how she felt now, under the commentary; I will tell you how I feel. When I read the bible itself, I felt as if I had drank a glass of wine; but this commentary tastes like a glass of wine in a pail of water. The wife acknowledged her feelings were the same; and by mutual consent they returned to the bible."

Nov. 20. Calling on Mr. N. I asked him if he had any good news? "Yes, I have—the Lord reigns!" "We have reason to praise the Lord, that in every sense that was not *news* to us," said a person present. "It is news to us," replied Mr. N. "as the song in heaven is ever a new

song. Why," added he, "the person who has the finest ear for music, and can relish it most, might be delighted to hear a new and excellent tune, frequently repeated; but he could not bear to hear it all the year round."

Conversing about trials, he said—"A smith, when about to make a poker, puts his iron into the fire. The Lord, when he means to make his people more holy, puts them into the furnace." While we were conversing, a lady called, and inquired of Mr. N. how he felt to-day? "I feel," said he, "like a man of eighty. I have long been a wonder unto many, and a wonder to myself. Had God left me to myself, and had I had the abilities of Hume and Voltaire, I should have been worse than either,"

At another time, which I have not dated, while speaking together respecting affliction, he remarked---"When trials are seven years old, they appear very well; but often, not so to-day: like a man standing upon an eminence, admiring all the ground around him, but not the spot on which he stands."

Speaking of these words, "My time is not yet come," he observed, "When a man's heart is much set upon any thing, he will pray very earnestly to obtain it; but even though the Lord may have promised that very thing, he will not get it till the Lord's time is come. Giving and

timing things are both from the Lord; and both are equally necessary. A man in spiritual distress cannot deliver himself from it, nor can all the world, though they should endeavour to assist him, till the Lord's time comes. Like a vessel that has run aground, all the men and horses you could find would not be able to draw it off; but so soon as the tide returns (and none can make the tide return a moment sooner than the regular fixed time) it moves off with the greatest ease. Even one man can move the ship now, which so many horses could not move before. So when God returns to a soul, it is an easy matter to steer clear of *troubles*, &c.

"A father, who loves his child who is in distress, will employ and pay a physician to do very painful things to him, that the distemper may thereby be removed.

"We may pray," said he, "for things that we have no ground to believe shall ever be fully answered. For example: we may pray that every person we meet with in the street may be converted. There is a believing time, a praying time, a waiting time."

A gentleman present, having related the circumstances that happened during a tremendous storm at sea he had been exposed to about three weeks before, the imminent danger he had been in of perishing, &c. Mr. N. turned to him, and said—"Sir, you were as safe there as here; the

danger was only apparent, not real. I prove it by your having escaped it, only you did not know that you were to escape; if you had, you would not have been so much afraid. I have been almost in every quarter of the world, but I have received more damage at my own door than in any of them. We are immortal till our time comes."

During another part of the conversation, Mr. N. remarked, that—"The world loves the name, but not the nature of a christian." As Christ was to the Jews and Greeks long ago, so he is to many yet—a stumbling-block and foolishness."

1805.

May 26. I asked Mr. N. how he did. "Never in better health, but my animal spirits very low." Do you purpose trying a few weeks in the country this summer? the country air might recruit your spirits. "No Sir, I never intend now to move beyond the stones of London, I am eighty. I have but little time left. I would not leave my people now for a thousand pounds." How does past life appear when looked back to from the top of eighty? "Like a dream!" We have had much forgiven us, do you not think so, Sir? "Yes, some as to out-

ward conduct, owe fifty pence; others five hundred. In this sense, those who are forgiven much, should love much; but though much has been forgiven me, I love little." Are you much fatigued after preaching? "I am no more fatigued on a Sabbath evening than on a Saturday." Sir, I was telling Miss C*** that I am soon going to Scotland by sea; she says I may be taken by the French. "And though you be, they cannot take you to the wrong place—only where God would have you." Mr. **** is an amiable character. Let us admire God in such characters; they are what God makes them, and no more."

August 27. Called, and inquired how he did. "I am eighty-one since you went to Scotland." Speaking of christians being more than conquerors, he said—"If a person was attacked on the highway by a robber, and he took a pistol from his pocket, and shot the robber dead, that person was a conqueror. Likewise, a general might obtain a victory, and die in the field, as General Wolfe did; yet he was a conqueror. A christian when he overcomes death, overcomes his last enemy."

Speaking of the surprise of some at Mr. **** leaving his people, among whom he had been useful, he said,—"When I left Olney for London, some people were surprised; but I had

reasons, in my own mind, that I could not proclaim upon the Royal Exchange. Perhaps that may be Mr. ****'s case."

Sept. 10. Found Mr. N. very feeble. He said—"If you come to be eighty-one, though in good health, you will find your feelings not very pleasant. O it is good to have God with us. God did not say to Noah and his family—*Go* into the ark, but *come* into the ark. He was there before them. God shut him in—not that he was afraid he should leap overboard."

I happened to say, that the promise in the 8th of the Romans, viz. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God," would be made good to every individual believer, and also to the church as a body, or great society. "Yes, to be sure," said he, "a bushel of pease is composed of so many individual pease; if you boil every individual pea, you boil the bushel."

I asked if he had written any more of his Ecclesiastical History than the single volume he had published? "No," said he, "I wrote that volume before I was a minister." Why did you not carry on the work? "Because I had not read enough of church history—but I was the remote cause of Milner writing his church history, which is a good one—he got the hint from me. There are many church histories, that con-

tain a history of the vices of the men who called themselves christians."

Did you ever meet, after you returned to Africa in better circumstances, that black woman mentioned in your Narrative, who treated you so harshly while you were in the fever? "O yes; I will tell you about that affair. Her name sounds like the letter P. or, I believe, rather like the two letters P I. When I went there as captain of a ship, I sent my long boat ashore for her. They soon brought her on board. I desired the men to fire guns over her head, in honour of her, because she had formerly done me much good, though she did not intend it. She seemed to feel it like heaping coals of fire upon her head. I made her some presents, and sent her ashore. She seemed to feel most comfortable when she had her back to my ship.

"I just recollect a circumstance," said he, "that happened to me when I first stepped ashore on the beach at that time. Two black females were passing—the first who noticed me observed to her companion, that *there* was Newton, and what do you think? he has got shoes!—ay, said the other, and stockings too! They had never before seen me with either."

A friend told me that he was present at Mr. N.'s when some ministers were disputing whether

faith or repentance were first. Mr. N. was silent till the debate was ended; then he said—"I have a question to ask. Are not the heart and lungs of a man both equally necessary to the life of the man?" Yes, surely. "Well, tell me which of these began to play first? This resembles the point you have been discussing."

Sept. 24. Mr. N. was in better spirits to-day than the last time I saw him. Conversing of the providence of God, which was a favourite topic of his, he said—"There is not a drop of rain falls, but as it is directed by God, nor a particle of dust carried along by the wind but to the very place which God has appointed.

"I sometimes say that men live in a clock. The annual revolution of the heavenly bodies I call an hour; the four seasons are the quarters; days are the minutes; and hours, the seconds. I used to call Christmas twelve o'clock. But how many allow this great clock to go on, without observation.

"Human life, I sometimes compare to a candle, which can burn no farther than the socket; but it is in danger, frequently, of being put out before it gets to the socket."

1806.

April 22. Mr. Newton, we are feeble creatures! "Without God," said he, "I can do no more in his service than the greatest blackguard who walks the street." Such an one was once very thoughtless. "So were you and I." Do you sleep in the night, Sir? "Yes, God gives me that. I have not good spirits, but I might have had the gout or stone." Some, Sir, suppose Jonah—"I suppose nothing; I believe all written." The inhabitants of New South Wales are becoming more civilized. "Yes," said he, "but who does it? It is God; means and effects are both from him."

May 20. Conversing of a misister in the church of Rome, who had written an excellent letter to the Bible Society, rejoicing in its institution, one observed, Is it not wonderful to find such a man in such a church. "No," said Mr. N. "God brought an infidel from Africa, [meaning himself] to preach his Son in England. Indeed Paul was converted to God whilst breathing out slaughter against the people of Christ. But I am worse than Paul. He acted uprightly while opposing Christ: I did it contrary to conviction. I was religiously educated, and I knew well I was doing wrong."

When conversing on another subject, Mr. N. remarked that—"God's commands are like the works of his right hand, and his permissions like those of his left; but both fulfil his will."

Wonderful that Mr. ***** is not more popular! "He is as God made him—he has been honoured of God to the conversion and building up of several." Afterwards he remarked—"We perceive God's plans best by taking an enlarged, general view of providence."

Dec. 18. When I went in to Mr. N. I inquired after his health. He said, "I am just as God would have me." He was much affected when he spoke of the death of his curate, Mr. Gunn, who had died only a few days before. He was so low at this time that I could hardly get him to speak. He said, "his animal spirits were no better, but that he lay at the mercy of God."

A friend told me, that Mr. N. when sending a supply of cash to Mr. Gunn, wrote on the outside of the parcel—"*Ammunition for my Gun.*"

1807.

Jan. 14. Found Mr. N. looking worse—his feet and legs so swelled that he could not walk across the room without help. I asked—How do

you do, Sir? "I am just as the Lord pleases." This is changeable weather. "It is according to the Lord's will." There are great sufferings just now on the continent. "All the fruit of sin."

Feb. 10. Mr. N. was now confined to his bed-room, not having been down stairs for three weeks. When I spoke, he said "I know your voice yet." He said also, "I have comfort from the word—there is much comfort in it, could we take it." When taking leave of him, he held up his hand, and prayed, "The Lord be with you all the day long, and grant you the best desires of your heart."

May 28. Calling in the evening, I found Mr. N. very weak. I sat by his side about ten minutes, repeating in his ear passages of scripture; but he spoke not a word, nor took any notice of me. I asked if he recollected who I was. He said, "I shall recollect you so long as I remember two words, *Grass Market.*" (The street in Edinburgh to which he used to direct his letters to me.) After prayer with him, he thanked me, and shaking my hand, he wished every blessing might attend me.

July 20. When I left Mr. N. on May 28, before going to Scotland, I never expected to see

him any more in this world; but was happy to find him to-night more lively than he was when I parted from him. He said, "he hoped his friends in Scotland did not forget him." Having repeated Phil. ii. 13. "For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure;" he added, "Not at the same time—*first* to will, *then* to do." Before we went to prayer, when the first verse of a hymn was read, he said, "You must read louder, for I cannot hear." At the end of the prayer, he said, with a loud voice, *Amen*, which shewed he had heard and joined in the prayer.

Sept. 9. At tea, Mr. N. asked a blessing, and returned thanks. In the latter he prayed for me in these words,—"Lord be with thy servant—there—to-night—to-morrow—and all his life."

He said—"When you were in Scotland, you would see the Grass Market, and observe some changes there."

Dec. 14. Visited Mr. N. this evening for the last time. He was very weak and low, more so than usual, it was thought to be owing to a cold. He took little notice of any present. I asked him how he slept? "Pretty well." No sleeping in heaven, Mr. Newton. "We shall not need it there" In a little after he added—"We need it here." After going to prayer with him, he

stretched out his hand, and shook mine, as if he thanked me; but he said nothing.

A person present mentioned, that the last time he had called on Mr. N. he remarked to him how useful he had been by his writings—that Mr. N. replied, "I need none of these sweetmeats."

Mr. N. retired from all things here below, to his heavenly rest, on the following Monday evening, December 21, 1807. His memory will be revered for many ages by all the lovers of simple truth.

THE END.

P

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